ATENEO DE MANILA LIBRARIES

■ Business / B1
SMC acquires 50% stake in Aussie firm Berri juices

■ Banking / BQ1
Banks rethink 'bigger is better' policy

■ Lifestyle / F1
Main features of South Beach diet and how it works

■ Entertainment / A31
Lani to perform in Las Vegas with Society of Seven

■ Sports / A25
President sends off 16-man group to Olympics

■ World / A10
Photo-journalist Cartier-Bresson dies at 95 in Paris

SECURITY is tightened in Makati City's financial district after Washington and New York raised terror alerts. ERIK ARAZAS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, August 6, 2004 ★★★ 68 pages / 8 sections / vol. 19 / no. 240 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Journalist gunned down in Batangas; 54th since '86

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Just four days after a radio commentator in Ilocos Norte was gunned down, another media practitioner suffered the same fate in Batangas yesterday.

Arnel Manalo, 42, a correspondent of the

JOURNALIST/ A22

Expect smaller oil price hikes often

No end in sight to rise in world crude prices

By Abigail L. Ho and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

EXPECT more frequent, but smaller, increases in the pump prices of petroleum products this month and so on.

This was the notice served on the consuming public by the country's oil companies even as Malacañang warned them not to take advantage of the escalating world crude oil prices by "indiscriminately" raising their prices.

Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association chair Fernando Martinez yesterday said that there would "certainly" be another price hike within the month.

"But in lower amounts," he said. "And more frequent (this time), whether it's an upward or downward adjustment, so we won't have to wait so long."

The Department of Energy earlier urged oil companies to increase oil prices more frequently but in smaller amounts which was better than less frequent but large adjustments.

"We urged them that in the future, we would rather see smaller increases perhaps more frequently than infrequently and not in large amounts that tend to create an oil price shock to the consumer. I believe they will listen to these suggestions and we will probably see frequent increases and decreases in coming weeks,"

EXPECT/ A22

Petron Corp. raised the prices of its gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 50 centavos per liter effective today.

Major and new oil players jacked up the prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by the same level Monday and Tuesday in response to escalating crude and refined petroleum product prices in the world market.

"ROCK strong and stable," the American surgeons declare after the highly complex 12-hour operation on Aug. 4 that successfully separated 2-year-old twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre at the Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, New York. Here their mother Arlene gives her sedated twins a kiss before the surgery. The doctors, the hospitals gave their services for free. Another generous donor is the PAL Foundation.

'You're now the mother of two boys'

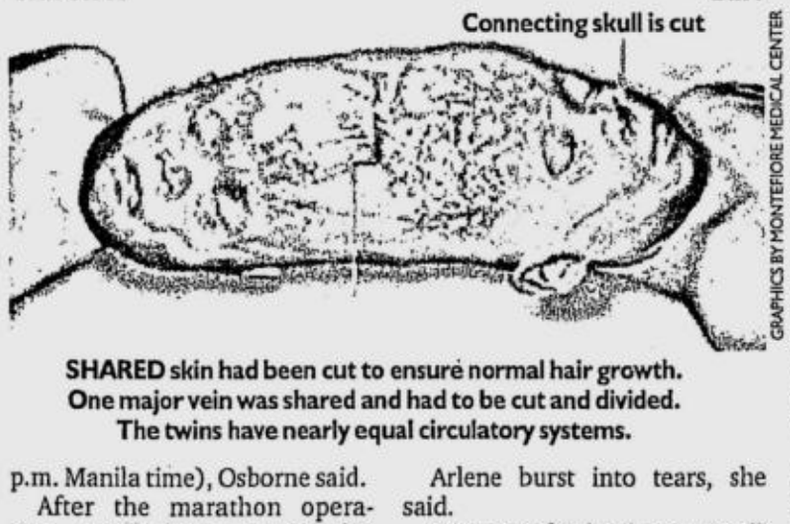
NEW YORK—"You're now the mother of two boys."

With these words, Dr. David Staffenberg told Arlene Aguirre of the successful surgical separation of her 2-year-old twins Carl and Clarence, who were born with the tops of their heads fused together.

Staffenberg—the Filipino boys' plastic surgeon—declared that Carl and Clarence Aguirre were "strong and stable."

Surgeons, nurses and technicians applauded in the operating room after Carl and Clarence were surgically separated at 10:32 p.m. Wednesday (10:32 a.m. Thursday Manila time), said Steve Osborne, a spokesperson for the Children's Hospital at Montefiore Medical Center.

The operation, which continued for several hours after the separation, was completed at 3:20 a.m. Thursday (3:20 p.m. Manila time), Osborne said.



SHARED skin had been cut to ensure normal hair growth. One major vein was shared and had to be cut and divided. The twins have nearly equal circulatory systems.

After the marathon operation, Staffenberg got on his knees, held Arlene's hands and delivered the news of the separation to the twins' mother in a private waiting area, said hospital spokesperson Pamela Adkins.

Arlene burst into tears, she said.

Screams of "Thank you, Lord" rang out inside the Aguirre home in Silay City, Negros Occidental, when relatives and neighbors learned about the successful operation. *(See story on Page A20.)*

Doctors teased apart abutting portions of the boys' brains after completing an incision around their skulls, and the twins' head-to-head operating tables were then slightly pulled apart, said Osborne.

Reconstruction of the boys' skulls, a major project, is to be left for later.

The separation was the culmination of a gradual surgical approach that lasted 10 months, a departure from the more common marathon operations that had separated other conjoined twins.

It is likely to be months before the twins' conditions can be fully assessed, according to their doctors.

In the past, separation was considered a success if both twins simply survived. But Montefiore's goal for the Aguirre boys, who have never

YOU'RE/ A20

6.6% INFLATION

Cost of living rising faster than income

THE COST of living continues to rise faster than most Filipinos' incomes.

Inflation jumped sharply last month, rising to its highest level in 34 months at an annualized 6.6 percent partly due to surging global oil prices, according to data from the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The NSO reported yesterday that there was a 10.8-percent increase in the cost of services.

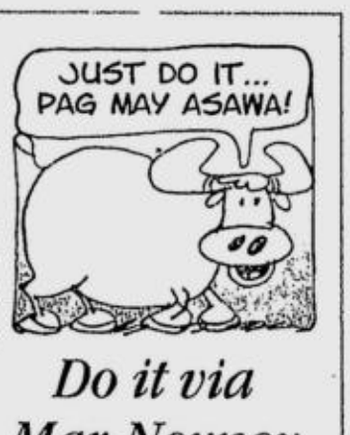
To buy the same basket of goods last year, one must earn 7 percent more today, according to economists. But the minimum wage has largely been frozen.

No wonder controlling price increases is the top concern Filipinos want President Macapagal-Arroyo to address in the first 100 days of her new six-year term.

A survey by Pulse Asia last month found that 76 percent of the respondents believed that the administration's top priority should be to control inflation.

The latest inflation figure was estimated under a new system using 2000 as the base year. Under the old system, using 1994 as the base year, the annualized inflation rate in July

COST OF LIVING/ A22



Do it via Mar-Noynoy method

By Carlito Pablo and Christian V.Esguerra

DON'T do it.

But if you have to, do it the Mar Roxas and Noynoy Aquino way.

This was the prescription of Rep. Abraham Mitra (LP, Palawan) for slowing down the runaway population growth.

DO IT/ A20

Abu hostage to tell all in Dos Palmas book

By Fe Zamora and Christine O. Avendaño

SEVERAL former Abu Sayyaf hostages will tell all and Sen. Serge Osmeña is willing to listen.

Former hostage Raul 'Buddy' Recio is writing a book that aims to set the record straight on the Dos Palmas kidnapping and the ensuing controversies surrounding the victims and the protagonists in the real-life drama set in Basilan in 2001.

Tentatively titled "Dos Palmas: The Truth," Recio said the book would provide answers to questions one would want to ask about the kidnapping, and correct the wrong impressions that another hostage, American missionary Gracia Burnham, may have made in her best-selling personal account, "In the Presence of My Enemies."

"This will be the definitive book on this incident. The events will be told as it was, as it happened. You see, we have no vested interest here but to tell the truth," Recio told the INQUIRER.

The "grandmother-of-all-books" on the Dos Palmas kidnapping will be co-written by Recio's wife Divina, 8-year-old son Raoul Julian, and sister-in-law Angie Montealegre.

Montealegre and the Recios were among the 20 people abducted by the Abu Sayyaf from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan on May 27, 2001, and taken to the bandit stronghold in the hin-

ABU/ A8

GMA, Noli: We did not cheat–they did

By Philip C. Tubeza

WE DIDN'T cheat. They did.

This was the gist of the separate counter-protests filed yesterday before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal by President Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro.

Ms Arroyo and De Castro turned the tables on defeated presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. and his running mate, Loren Legarda, who had accused them of cheating massively to win the May elections.

Last month, Poe and Legarda formally contested the results in about 60 percent of 216,000 polling precincts nationwide, seeking a vote recount.

Ms Arroyo and De Castro said that it was Poe and Legarda who actually cheated them.

While maintaining that the May elections had been generally fair and honest, Ms Arroyo and De Castro said Poe and Legarda had cheated them in several provinces which cut down their lead over the opposition candidates.

The President said she was cheated in "all the precincts that functioned" in the last elections in the "entire" provinces of Nueva Ecija, Rizal, Quezon, South Cotabato, Northern Samar and Ilocos Norte.

De Castro said he was cheated in 28,621 precincts in Nueva Ecija, Quezon, Rizal, Ilocos Norte, La Union, Northern Samar and in Malabon and Navotas.

GMA, NOLI/ A22

NPA to free 2 soldiers held in Bicol

By Christian V. Esguerra

TWO ARMY soldiers held captive by communist guerrillas are set to be released in the next few days in time for the resumption of formal peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front in Oslo later this month.

Luis Jalandoni, chief negotiator of the NDF, yesterday said that Lt. Ronaldo Fedelino and Pfc. Ronel Nemeno will be freed as soon as the military and police suspend offensive operations in Bicol where the captives are being held.

Jalandoni said the two Army captives could even be released before Fedelino's first-born Alea Nicole turns 2 on Aug. 16.

NPA/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2004

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text Feedback: inquirer news name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western Luzon will have occasional rains. Visayas and the rest of Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thundertorms. Mindanao will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/08/06/04

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Occasional Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Defer new taxes, traders ask GMA

By Gil Cabacungan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is being urged by businessmen to defer the implementation of new or higher taxes for at least six months to ease the impact of surging oil prices on public.

Industrialist Raul Concepcion told the INQUIRER that the President was better off putting her tax package for at least half a year because it would only meet more formidable resistance from a public currently grappling with rising price of fuel.

Concepcion said that the President's new tax measures—from the shift to gross income tax to indexation of sin taxes—has been facing mounting opposition even from her allies in Congress.

He said the President could resume work on the tax measures as soon as oil prices, which have been hitting record highs in the last few days, stabilize.

Makati Business Club vice chair Ramon del Rosario Jr. said the President should immediately focus on undertaking "serious energy and fuel conservation efforts" to address the precarious oil price situation. But Del Rosario said she should "continue to work on the tax revenues that could take months to complete anyway."

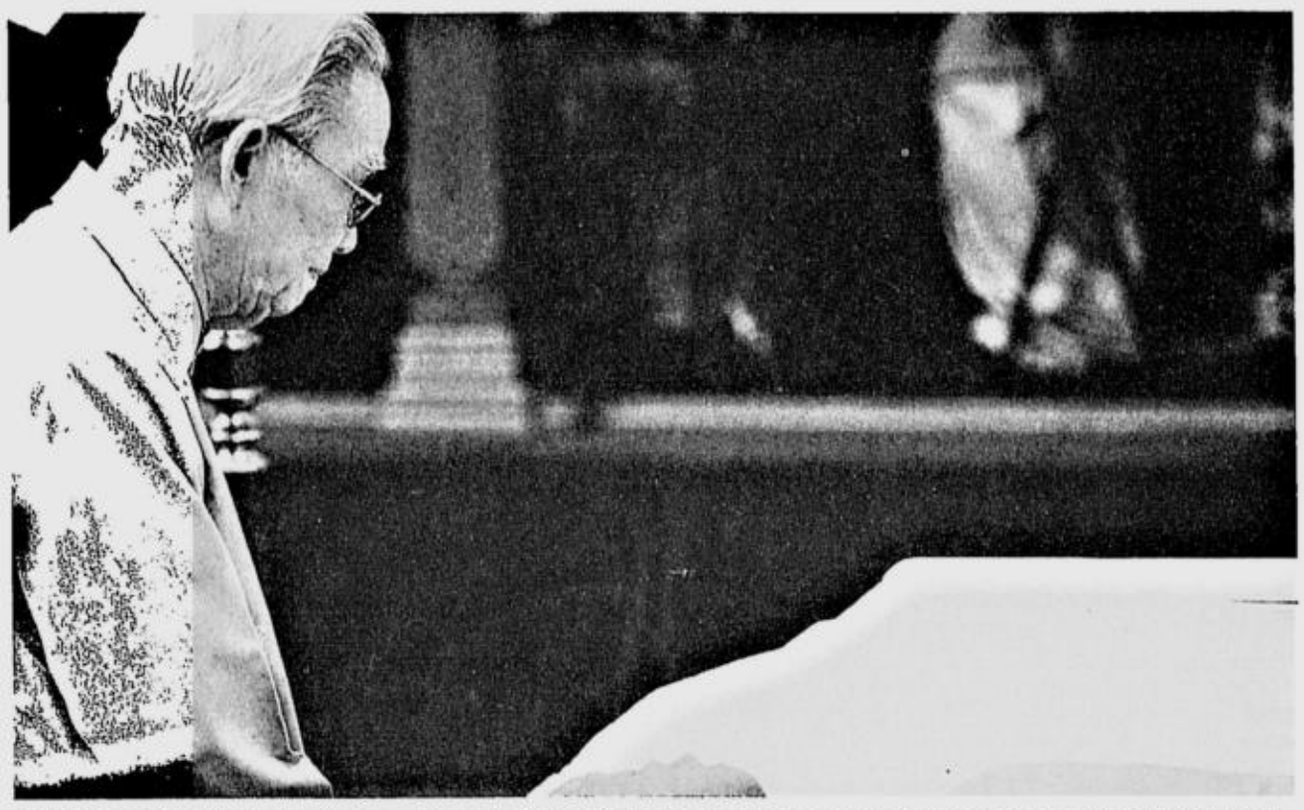
Concepcion said the Economic Managers Group has already agreed to the businessmen's proposal to suspend indefinitely the President's order to raise duties on petroleum products from 3 percent to 5 percent and put on hold deliberations on an administration-sponsored bill that would slap a P2 per liter tax on fuel oil.

Concepcion said these twin moves should provide relief to the public which has yet to adjust to the dramatic increase in their fuel costs over the last few weeks.

Although Concepcion said some members of the EMG have expressed support to defer action on tax reform measures, Malacañang yesterday appeared determined to pursue its P80 billion tax reform program amid surging oil prices.

In a statement, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said: "The administration is pushing for new revenue measures as a matter of national interest and survival."

Bunye said the Palace expected "stiff opposition" to these measures but he appealed to its critics to "stick to reasoned debate and sobriety" and avoid "grandstanding." Bunye said the President would depend on her "allies in Congress to lead and win this fight."



FORMER COMRADE Jovito Salonga, himself a former Senate president, pays his last respects to Arturo Tolentino in necrological rites at the Senate. JESS YUSON

Senators pay tribute to Ka Turing

By Christine O. Avendaño

"FAVORED by the Gods."

That was how former Sen. Jovito Salonga summed up the life of former Sen. Arturo Tolentino who died last Tuesday at the age of 94.

Salonga, who was Tolentino's colleague in the pre-martial law Senate, said those who reached 90 years of age like Tolentino were divinely favored "for it is the time of greatest wisdom and insights."

Senators past and present paid tribute to the man they said could have been the country's President during necrological rites held at the chamber yesterday.

Salonga's eulogy was in the form of a letter in which he said he admired Tolentino "from afar, even before I met you, because of your idealism in organizing the militant Young Philippines, with Wenceslao Vinzons, the hero of my youth."

Salonga, who is Tolentino's junior by 10 years, said that he also admired the former Senate President for his "independence of mind, integrity and strength of conviction."

Among those who eulogized Tolentino were former senators Eva Estrada Kalaw and Francisco Tatad and opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Kalaw said she would like to remember Tolentino as a "private person" and regretted that she could not visit him last week as she had intended to.

Last of the titans

Tatad described Tolentino as "the last of the titans and he was bigger than most."

He said Tolentino could have been President. "Yet in the range and quality of his service to the nation, he far outpaced and outclassed many worthy Presidents," said Tatad.

Angara said the the presidency "probably belonged to him [Tolentino] by right."

"Whatever we say here today we cannot sum up adequately Ka Turing's record as a parliamentarian, scholar, law professor and public servant," Angara said.

He said Tolentino's public career spanned "almost 70 years of our nation's life so far."

Sen. Miriam Santiago said her father had told her to study law and follow the example of Tolentino whom she met when she was a law student.

Senate President Franklin Drilon recalled meeting Tolentino in his freshman year at the University of the Philippines College of Law. He said Tolentino shaped the minds of countless law students in the country with the several books he authored on the law.

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., president of the Nacionalista Party, said he never got the chance to meet Tolentino but he "mourned the loss of a distinguished Nacionalista."

In his response, Tolentino's son, Salvador, said his father did not even want to be a lawyer but a civil engineer. It was his grandfather who wanted Tolentino to be a lawyer, he said.

He recalled that during the wake for the late Sen. Ambrosio Padilla, his father asked him whether he thought people would still know and remember him like Padilla.

"Today, I can finally tell him. Yes, Papa, they did," he said.

A two-hour necrological service for Tolentino was also held yesterday afternoon at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pasay City.

DFA undersecretaries Franklin Ebdalin, Rafael Seguis and Jose Brillantes, and former foreign undersecretary Rosario Manalo delivered eulogies for Tolentino who was foreign affairs minister from July 1984 to February 1985 during the Marcos regime. *Jerome Aning*

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For believing that there is hope amidst crises

For being a faithful shepherd to his flock
For loving God unfalteringly and giving himself unselfishly for others

For embodying the true spirit and mission of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

AWARDING RITES
August 6, 2004, Friday, 10:00 a.m.
Villa San Miguel Hall

SC chief lashes back at Palace

'Justices may not be economic experts, but they know the law'

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Justices may not be experts on economic matters but they do have the authority on issues concerning the Constitution.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. yesterday maintained that the courts had the authority to look into power-related cases, especially if these concerned possible violations of the Constitution.

"It's not a question of expertise in economic policies because indeed we don't have the expertise," said Davide, who was here to preside over an executive session with judges and their staff.

"But when the Constitution is tested, we do have the authority," he said.

The Chief Justice was reacting to presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye's statement on Tuesday that judges should keep their hands off the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) which, he said, was handling intricate power-related cases beyond the expertise of the regular courts.

"While we respect its (judicial) decision, we also make an appeal to our courts to give the ERC, also an independent body, the benefit of the doubt and allow it to exercise its competence and proficiency in resolving highly complicated and technical power issues," Bunye had said at a briefing.

Bunye's statement came after the Court of Appeals last week ordered the ERC to review its approval last year of a Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) petition for a 17-centavo per kilowatt-hour rate increase.

The court said the state power regulator had "gravely erred" when it approved the rate increase without reviewing Meralco's records.

The CA remanded the case to the ERC and ordered it to have the Commission on Audit go over Meralco's books.

DAVIDE

Davide refused to comment on the CA decision although he admitted he had yet to read it.

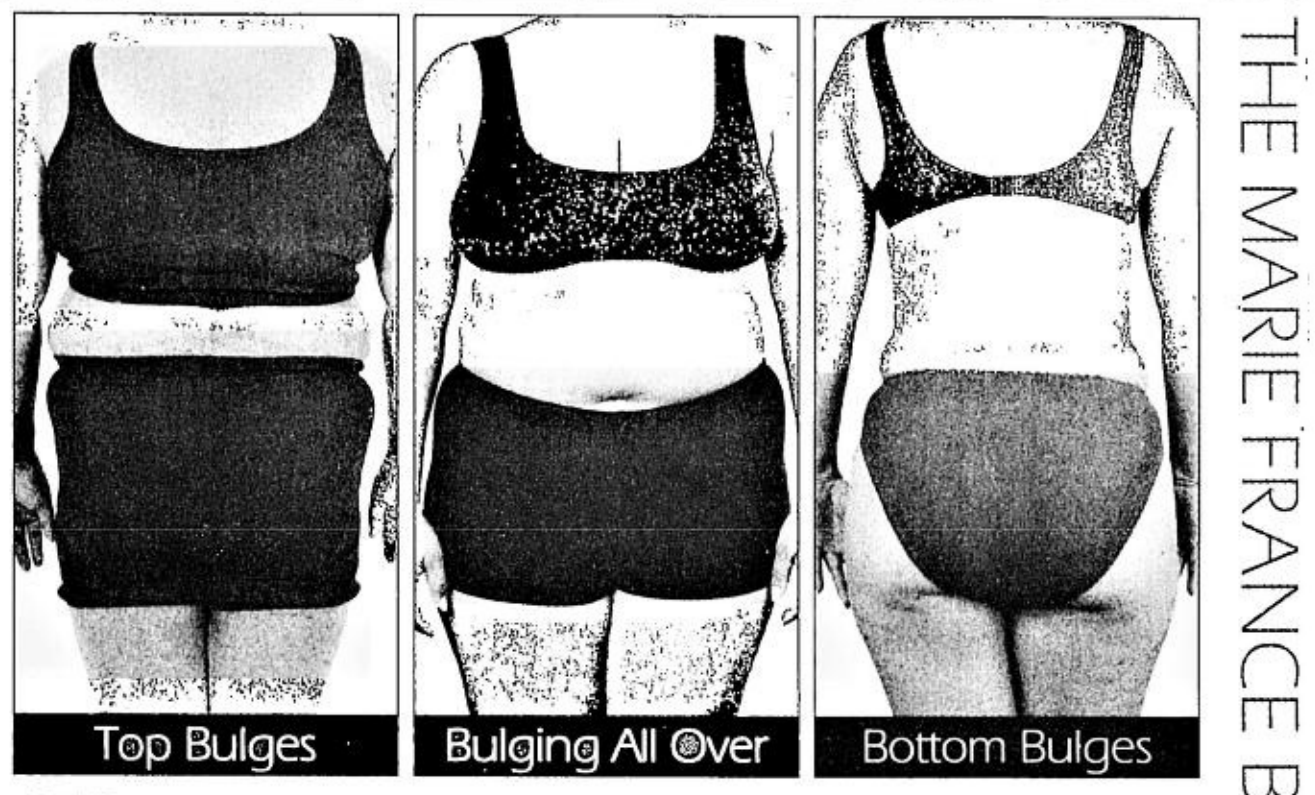
"I can't take sides at this time because, frankly, I haven't read the decision... As I said, there were cases affecting economic policies and we declared these to be unconstitutional when we found that certain provisions of the Constitution had been violated," he said.

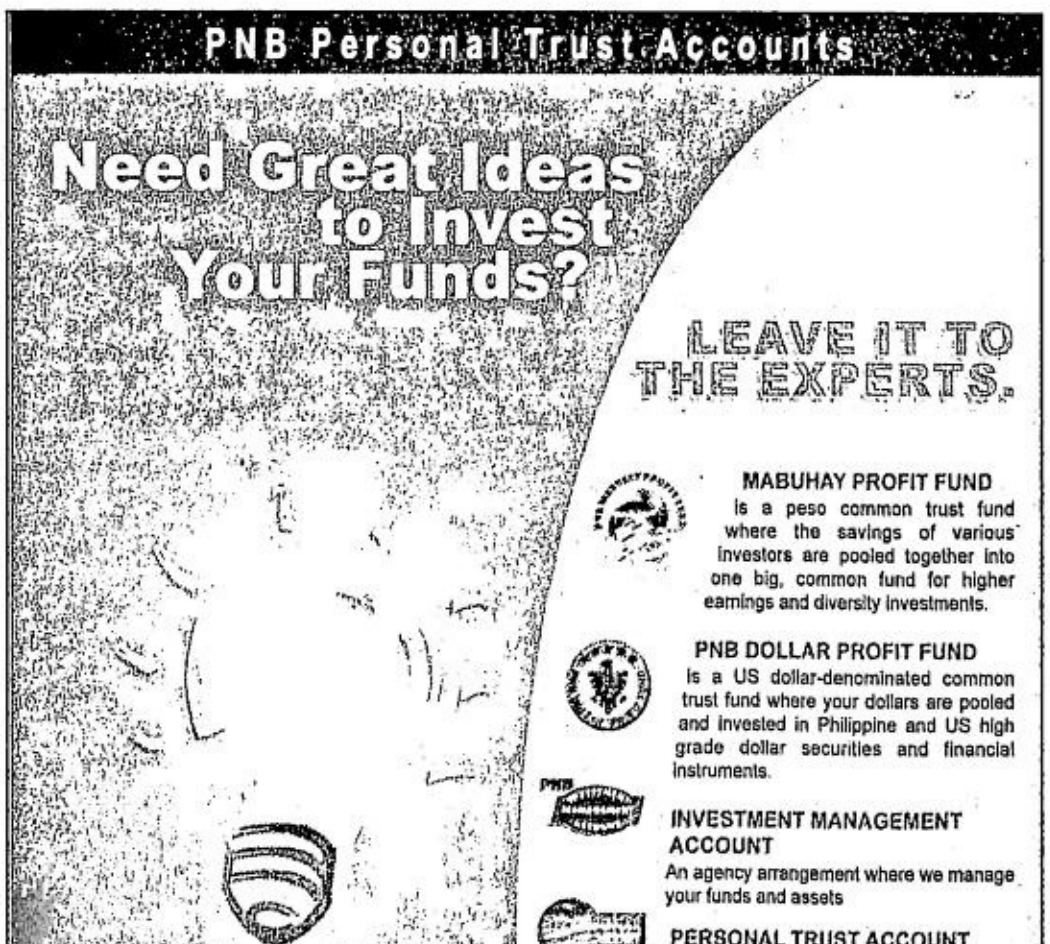
Davide admitted that the judiciary had been criticized over decisions affecting economic policies.

But he stressed that the courts had decided the cases based on violations of certain constitutional provisions.

"Before, there was criticism of some decisions affecting some economic policies and we maintained in the past and I still maintain now that we were not actually usurping the executive in the matter of policy determination, especially in the field of the economy," Davide said.

"It's our role to determine whether any agency of the government has acted with grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction. That is our authority provided for under the Constitution," he said.





BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Corrections

In the article, "Losing bidder sues PCGG over Ortigas lot," (page A4, PDI, Aug. 5, 2004), the figures quoted were way off the mark.

According to the complaint of businessman Romeo C. Campos, the Mid-Pasig Land Dev't Corp. leased 16,500 sq meters of the Payanig lot to businessman Gene de la Cruz in September 2002 for P30 and P60 per sq meter, not P30,000 and P60,000 as stated in the article.

Campos claimed De la Cruz started subleasing the property to different business firms for P140 to P150 per sq. meter per month, not P140,000 to P150,000 as stated in the same article.

'Shadow' speaker wants party lines drawn

By Carlito Pablo

LAY ALL your cards on the table!

This was the challenge issued yesterday by Antipolo Rep. Ronaldo Puno, leader of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino, for all other political parties to bare their list of members to settle once and for all the question of party affiliations of each member of the House of Representatives.

"We should all come out simultaneously with our membership list," said Puno, who has earned the moniker the "shadow Speaker."

Puno found an ally in Rep. Abraham Mitra (Palawan) of the Liberal Party which had recently entered into an alliance with Kampi.

"Until we finally verify party affiliations, we will not have an orderly and equitable allocation of committees," Mitra said.

The ruling Lakas-CMD party quickly accepted Puno's challenge.

A few hours after Puno issued the challenge, Lakas leaked an "informal membership survey" showing the members of all parties in the House.

Based on the Lakas "survey," the breakdown of the House's 236 membership is as follows: Lakas, 83; Nationalist People's Coalition, 44; LP, 32; Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, 9; Kampi, 21; Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, 4; Nacionalista Party, 6; Partido Demokratiko Pilipino, 1; Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, 2; Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino, 3; Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, 1; Reporma, 1; Aksyon Demokratiko, 1; and party-list representatives, 24.

PUNO PDI PHOTO

The Lakas list of 83, however, includes Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo who was at the Rembrandt Hotel in Quezon City yesterday for a Kampi meeting. It also counted Albay Rep. Joey Salceda who was also present at the same meeting.

Lakas stalwart Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (Surigao del Norte) earlier dismissed Kampi as a "paper party" and the Kampi-LP bloc as a "ghost alliance."

But, according to Puno, 66 congressmen have "applied for membership in Kampi."

"But if we are going to count only the core, there are a minimum of 40 members who are exclusively Kampi," Puno said.

Because of claims and counterclaims, the counting may follow what Puno wants.

"We will ask each congressman to declare his or her political affiliation at the floor of the House," Puno said.

Kampi and LP are both allied with the administration but have been locking horns with Lakas and its alliance partner, the NPC, for dominance in the House.

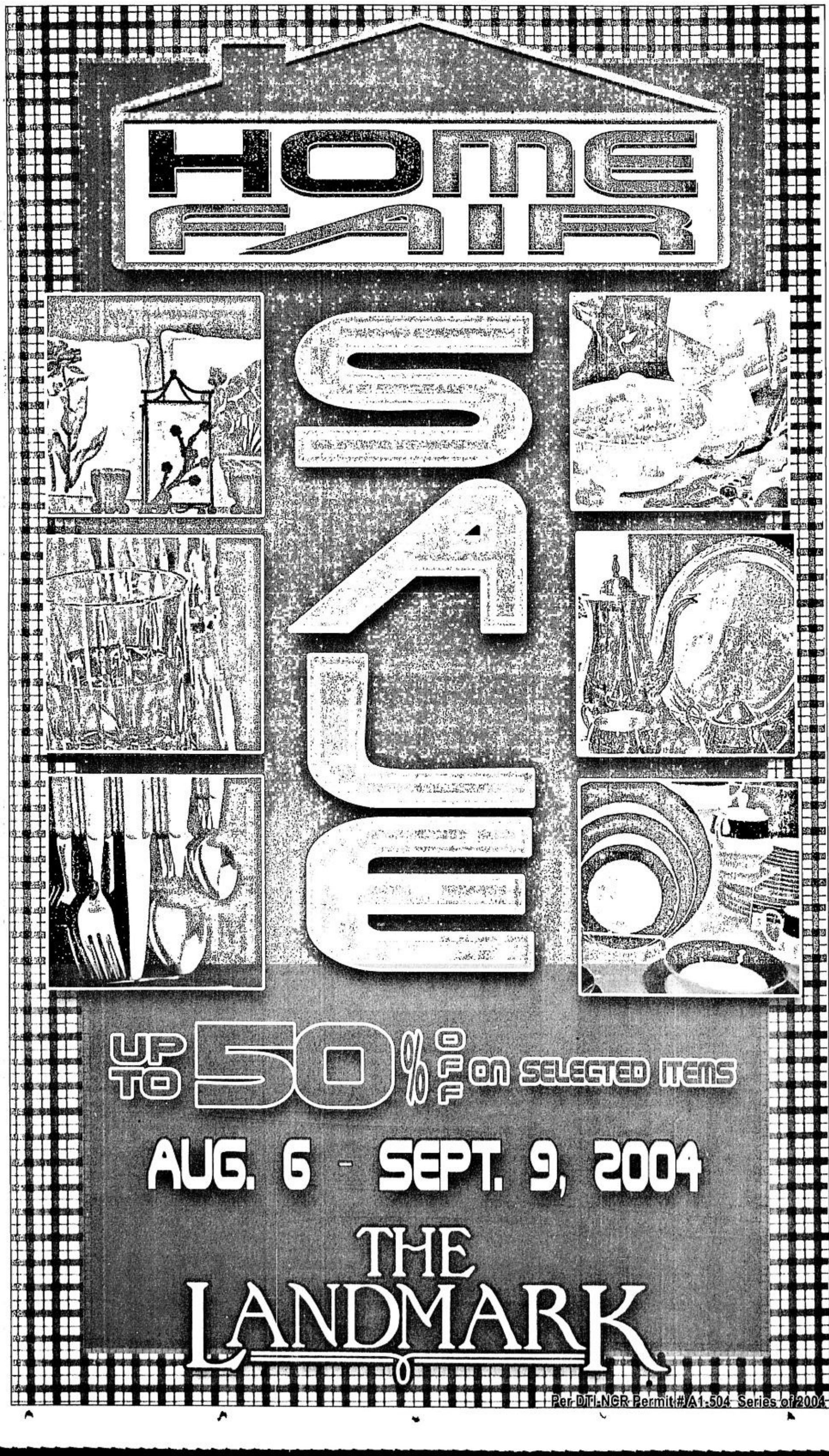
The four parties dominate the Rainbow 4 coalition in the House but have been on uneasy terms.

Earlier, President Macapagal-Arroyo had to intervene in the fight for the speakership to ensure that Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., president of Lakas, gets reelected to a fourth term as House Speaker.

Her timely intervention nipped in the bud a plot by the Kampi-LP bloc led by Puno to unseat de Venecia.

Ms Arroyo is chair of both Lakas and Kampi. She is also the honorary chair of LP.

On Wednesday, Ms Arroyo again intervened to prevent a showdown between Lakas and Kampi over the chairmanship of the powerful House ways and means committee by having the respective bets of the two parties agree to a term-sharing agreement.



The Daily Gospel

Friday, August 6, 2004
Transfiguration of Our Lord

1st Reading: Dn 7:9-10, 13-14
2nd Reading: 2 P 1:16-19
Gospel: Lk 9:28-36

About eight days after Jesus had said all this, he took Peter, John and James and went up the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became dazzling white. Two men were talking with Jesus: Moses and Elijah. They had just appeared in heavenly glory and were telling him about his departure that had to take place in Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions had fallen asleep, but they awoke suddenly and saw Jesus' Glory and the two men standing with him. As Moses and Elijah were about to leave, Peter said to him, "Master, how good it is for us to be here for we can make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." For Peter didn't know what to say. And no sooner had he spoken than a cloud appeared and covered them; and the disciples were afraid as they entered the cloud. Then these words came from the cloud, "This is my Son, my Chosen one, listen to him." And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was there alone.

The disciples kept this to themselves at the time, telling no one of anything they had seen.

Commentary

Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain to pray, and while he prayed they fell asleep! Most translations charitably say they hadn't quite dropped off, "Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory" (NRSV). The JB has them "heavy with sleep, but they stayed awake." The NIV says, "they were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake..." The CCB alone puts them soundly to sleep! Honest sleep is better than pretending to be awake! When Jesus said so often to people (perhaps even shouted), "Stay awake!" he didn't mean half-awake and half-asleep. I take it that those three were as good as asleep. So don't feel so bad if you feel drowsy or fall asleep at prayer! Peter, James and John did! St. Thérèse of Lisieux famously slept at prayer and felt no guilt about it in a guilt-ridden period of Catholic spirituality, even though she was by nature very scrupulous.

It says, "They awoke and saw his glory." Had they been in a zen monastery the monitor would have kept them awake with the kyosaku, the "awakening stick!" Someone asked a zen master once, "Could I become enlightened during sleep?" And he replied, "If it doesn't happen to you during sleep it will never happen, because what you call your waking life is only another form of sleep!"

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Supreme Court Doctrines

LEGAL ETHICS—Lawyer's oath—The respondent has sufficiently demonstrated that he is morally and legally unfit to remain in the exclusive and honorable fraternity of the legal profession. In his long years as a lawyer, he must have forgotten his sworn pledge as a lawyer. The oath to which all lawyers have subscribed in solemn agreement to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of justice is not a mere ceremony or formality for practicing law to be forgotten afterwards; nor is it mere words, drift and hollow, but a sacred trust that lawyers must uphold and keep inviolable at all times. By swearing the lawyer's oath, they become guardians of truth and the rule of law, as well as instruments in the fair and impartial dispensation of justice. This oath is firmly echoed and reflected in the Code of Professional Responsibility. All of these underscore the role of a lawyer as the vanguard of our legal system. When the respondent took the oath as a member of the legal profession, he made a solemn promise to so stand by his pledge. In this covenant, respondent miserably failed. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Per Curiam, Dumali vs Torres, A.C. No. 5161. April 14, 2004] BY R. B. VERA

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'ILLEGAL CONTRACT'

Void Smokey Mountain housing deal, SC urged

By Philip C. Tubeza

LAWYER Francisco Chavez yesterday asked the Supreme Court to nullify the government's contract for the multi-billion Smokey Mountain development project with corporations owned by businessman Reghis Romero.

Chavez, a former solicitor general, said the joint venture agreement between the National Housing Authority and Romero's R-II Builders Inc. was illegal as it allowed a private corporation to acquire at least 79 hectares of public land.

R-II Builders was supposed to acquire the land in exchange for developing the former dump site into a low-cost medium-rise housing and industrial/commercial complex.

According to Chavez, the firm ran out of money for the project in 1994. But instead of terminating the agreement and going after R-II Builders for breaching its obligation to fully finance the development of Smokey Mountain, the government even aided the company financially by shelling out more than P3.1 billion, he said.

Financed by gov't

"In the end, it was actually the government which ended up financing the project," Chavez said.

Chavez said the contract should be nullified since it allows R-II Builders, a private firm, to reclaim and own at least 150 hectares of foreshore and submerged lands near the former dumpsite.

He said that this was illegal as the Supreme Court had ruled in its decision on the PEA-Amari scandal that lands in the public domain cannot be acquired by private corporations.

Chavez said the submerged lands near the former dumpsite were "inalienable lands which are beyond the commerce of men."

He said NHA and R-II also did not have the authority to reclaim lands in the public domain since this power is vested exclusively with the Public Estates Authority.

He noted that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources also did not give the NHA the authority to reclaim land.

Chavez claimed that the government had prevailed on various government agencies to put money into an asset pool to finance the R-II project.

TRO sought

"Billions [of pesos] worth of taxpayers' money are being used to finance this void and illegal project," said Chavez who asked the SC to issue a temporary restraining order while it deliberates on the case.

The agencies included the Social Security System which gave P1.039 billion; the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (P835 million); Land Bank of the Philippines (P124 million); Home Guarantee Corp.-Abot Kaya Pabahay Fund (P350 million); Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (P6 million); Philippine National Bank (P300 million); HGC Provident Fund (P30 million); and other financial institutions (P473 million).

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Gov't clears US vessels in Subic waste dumping

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINE government would not tolerate the dumping of human waste in Subic Bay and would maintain vigilance over activities in the joint RP-US military exercises, an official of the Visiting Forces Agreement Commission said yesterday.

Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes II, Vfacom executive director, said the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority had so far cleared two US Navy vessels of spilling human waste at Alava pier there late last month.

Paredes briefed reporters yesterday and issued what he called "a final statement" to put to rest the controversy involving the USS Russell and the USS McCampbell.

The two ships had docked at Subic for the combined exercise of the Philippine and American Navies dubbed "Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training 2004."

Paredes said "further investigation" was ongoing in the case of the Russell while the contractor responsible for the spillage attributed to the McCampbell had conducted a cleanup and been penalized for its negligence.

The official said the SBMA "thought it just to withdraw the complaints" against the Russell because of "inconclusive evidence and facts."

He said it could not be ascertained if the waste had come from the ship or if it had been washed ashore by the bad weather and had coincidentally swept by the vessel.

Paredes said US military ships do not readily dispose of solid human waste. He said the human waste is treated, processed and turned into bilge before being disposed of by local contractors, following protocol.

The SBMA ecology department served a notice of violation to the Russell after it was reported that it had discharged human waste into Subic Bay on July 27.

Ban on Iraq deployment of RP workers stays–POEA

By Martin P. Marfil

THE BAN stays.

The increase in the number of bombing incidents and the abduction of foreign workers in Iraq has prompted a labor official to declare that the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to that country will remain.

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration chief Rosalinda Baldoz told reporters the decision not to lift the ban this week came after she met with Special Envoy to the Middle East Roy Cimatu on Wednesday to assess the situation.

"As of this time, there is a higher risk (for Filipino workers) because of the increase in bombings... including some churches. Based on the initial security assessment of (Cimatu), we do not see the possible lifting of the ban at this time," Baldoz said.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas on Tuesday announced that a review was being conducted to determine if the ban on sending Filipino workers to Iraq would be lifted.

Sto. Tomas had said that the major consideration would be the security of the Filipino workers.

Sto. Tomas' statement came amid reports that the Philippines stood to lose P5.7 billion in potential remittances over a two-year period if the 6,000 job orders for Filipinos in Iraq were not filled.

Yesterday, Baldoz reiterated that the government's focus was on the "security and protection of the workers, not employment."

She pointed out that despite the ban, the number of Filipino workers deployed overseas remained high as demand was high in countries near Iraq.

The demand, Baldoz said without elaborating, was spurred by the reconstruction of Iraq.

The original ban on the deployment of overseas workers to Iraq was first imposed in April after a Filipino truck driver was killed in an ambush.

It was lifted on July 1 but was reimposed several days later after Angelo de la Cruz was abducted.

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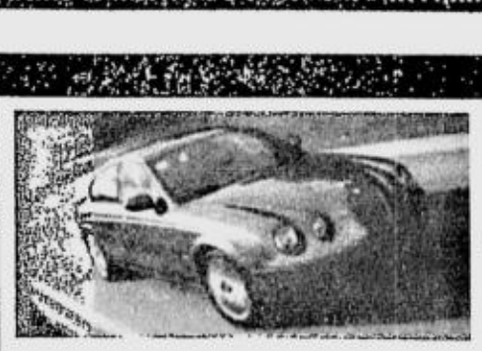
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Bayan files suit vs WPD for rally dispersal

By Armand N. Nocum

THE MILITANT group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan yesterday filed charges of frustrated murder and slight physical injuries against five officials of the Western Police District for the alleged violent dispersal of militant groups in Plaza Miranda on July 13.

Charged were WPD chief Pedro Bulaong, Supt. Romeo Sapitula, Chief Inspector Rolando Miranda, Inspector John Guigui and SPO1 Levy Cardino, who reportedly struck Bayan's Dr. Carol Araullo, resulting in her having a "six-centimeter laceration" on her scalp.

Dispersal

"Cardino hit me thrice behind my back when we were about to leave. They could have dispersed us without hitting me in the head. This case is important to me because the police already have a mindset to hurt people," the Bayan vice chair said in an impromptu press briefing after filing the case.

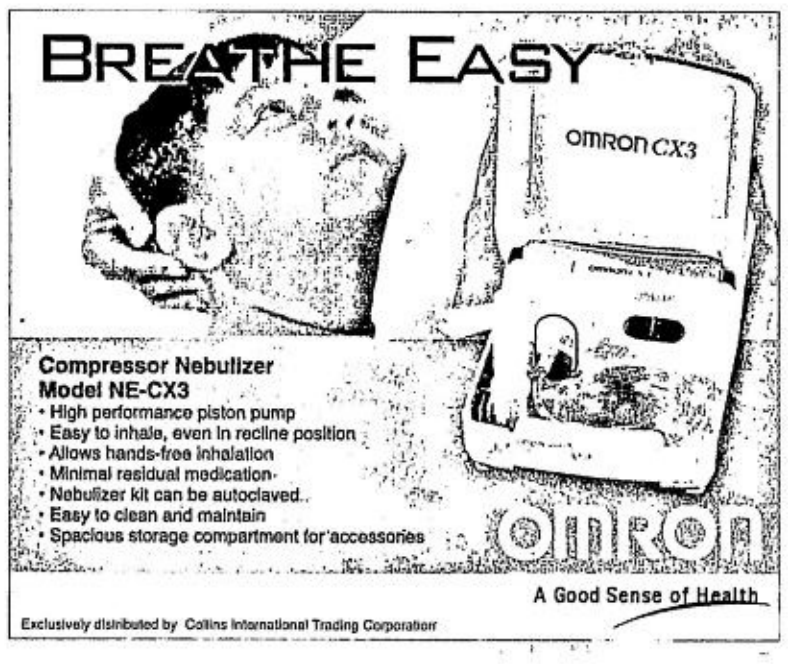
The violent dispersal happened when the group was holding a prayer vigil for the safe return of OFW Angelo de la Cruz, who was held hostage by Iraqi rebels. De la Cruz was eventually freed after the government pulled out its humanitarian mission from Iraq.

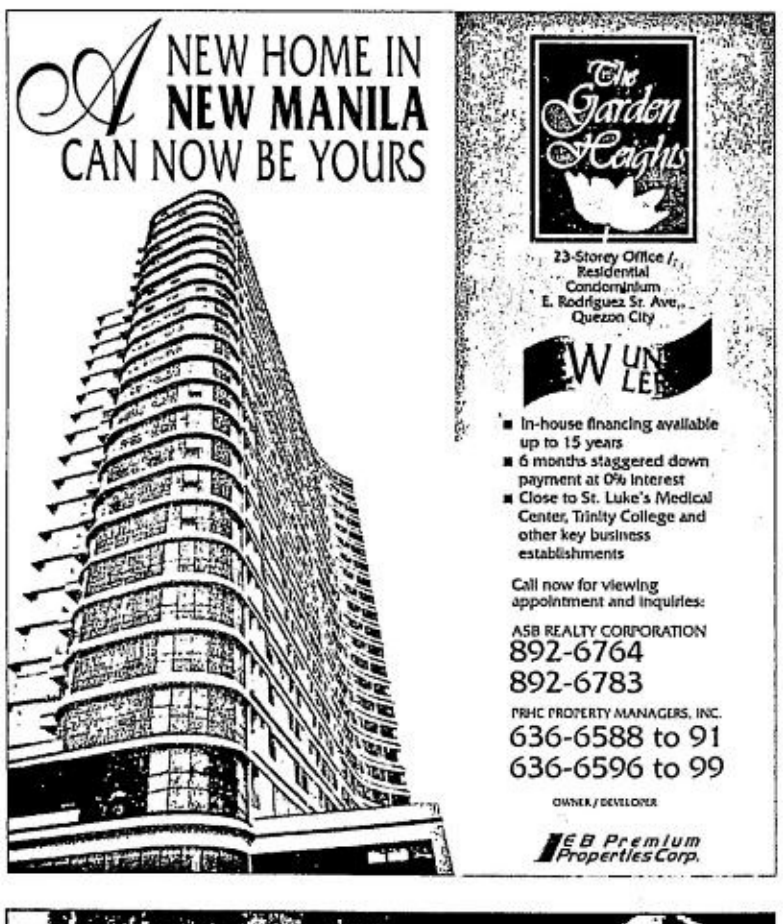
Araullo was accompanied by 15 of her colleagues in the filing of the complaint. Nine of the complainants filed charges of slight physical injuries. The third suit involves the violation of Batas Pambansa 880 or the peoples' right to assemble peacefully.

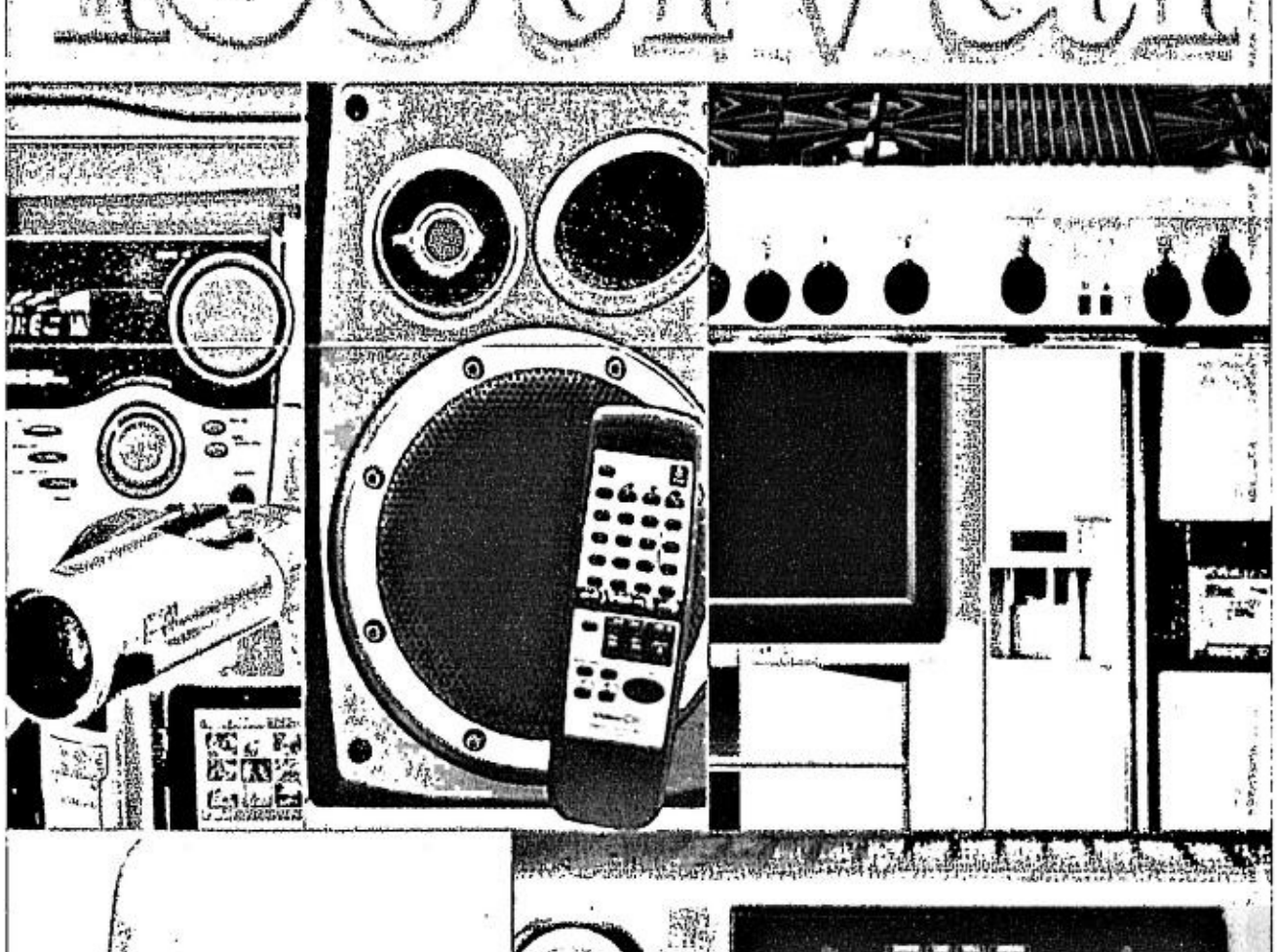
Almario; 67

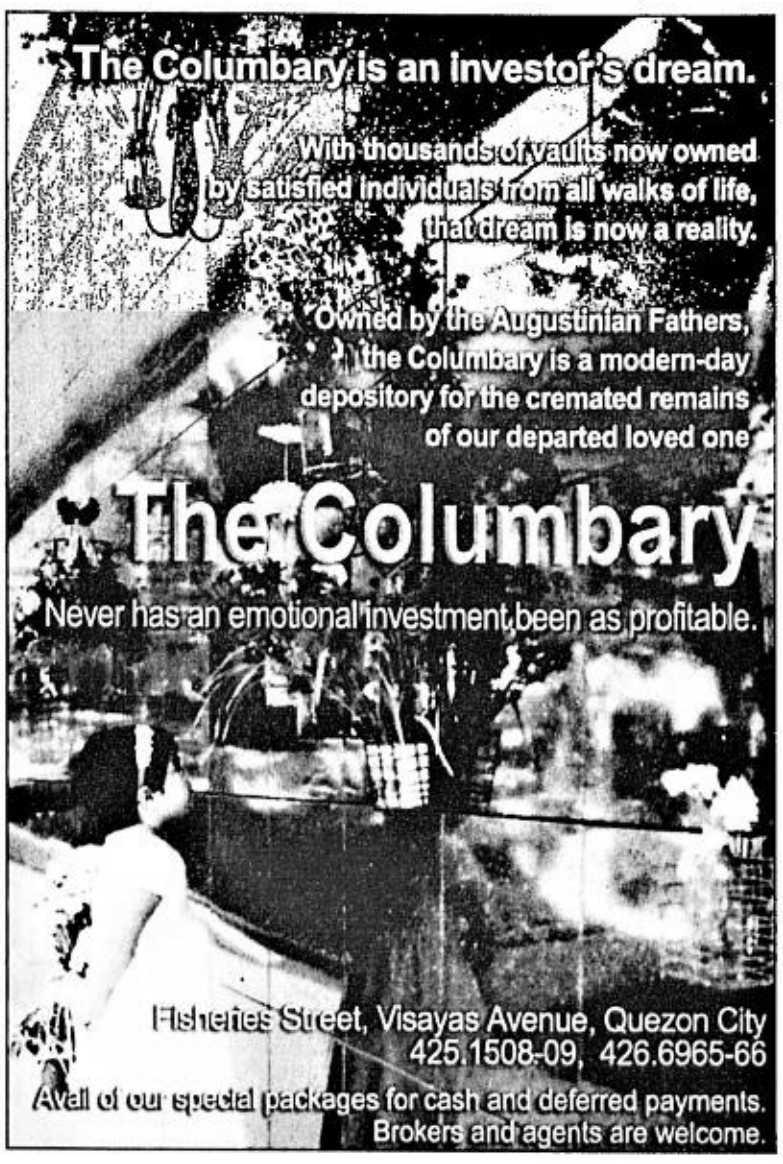
RODOLFO F. Almario, brother of lawyer-journalist Manuel F. Almario, died last Aug. 3, at age 67 of a heart attack. His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Consolation Church in Tiera Pura Subdivision, Quezon City. Interment will take place on Monday, at the Himlayang Pilipino Cemetery in Tandang Sora, QC.

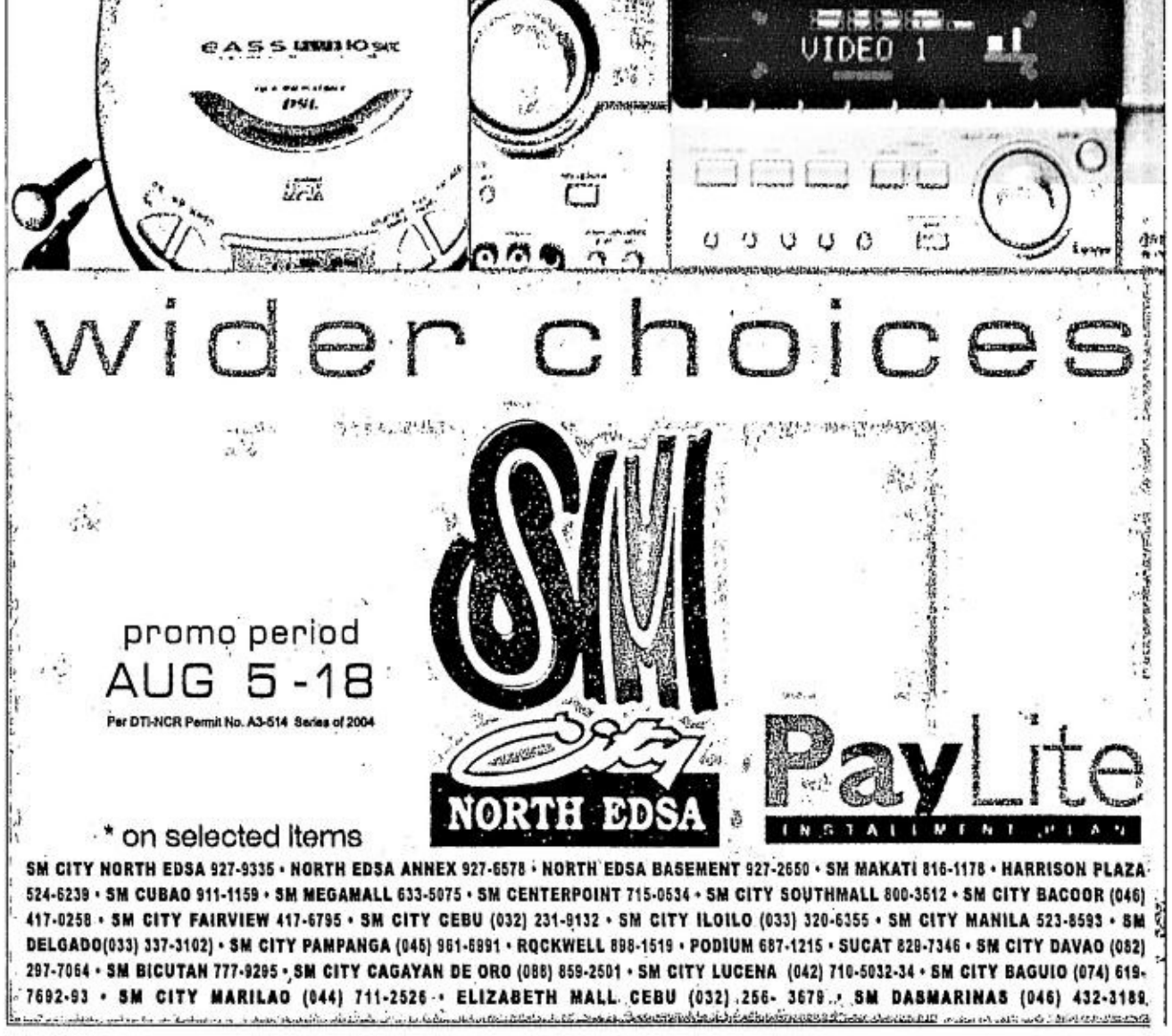
An engineer and retired Bureau of Customs officer, he is survived by his wife, Lourdes, an auditor of the Commission on Audit; children Melissa, a US-based computer analyst; Mariquit, executive producer of PIPOL, ABS-CBN; Soraya, a medical doctor at Children's Hospital in QC; and Makati businessman Michael Angelo. He is also survived by siblings Alejandro, a medical doctor in the US; Manuel Engineers Benjamin and Dominador; and lawyer Eva Almario-Castillo. The deceased hailed from Masbate City.











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Abu hostage to tell all in Dos Palmas book

From page A1

terlands of Basilan.

Osmeña pushes probe

In the Senate, despite the reservations of his colleagues, Osmeña is pushing for the reopening of the inquiry into charges that the military and the Abu Sayyaf had colluded with each other during the siege of Lamitan, Basilan, in 2001 thereby allowing the bandits, along with their hostages, to break through a military cordon.

Two years ago, the Senate recommended the court-martial of three officers over the escape, but a military tribunal later cleared them.

Osmeña said he would deliver a privilege speech next week to pave the way for the reopening of the inquiry on the alleged collusion between the military and the Abu Sayyaf.

He said the new inquiry would focus on the testimony of the kidnap victims as he noted that the previous Senate inquiry "never got on record the testimony of the victims except for Recio because they were afraid to talk."

First part

Recio said the first part of the tell-all book would be written by him, Divina and RJ, who were held hostage from May 27 to June 2. The latter part will be written by Angie, who was released on Nov. 6, 2001, after six months in captivity.

Their collaborative work presents a full account of life inside the Abu Sayyaf, plus the point of view of an outsider who was negotiating for the release of a family member.

"This is not fiction, unlike Gracia's book which is 50-percent fiction and 50-percent non-fiction," Recio said, laughing.

He said Gracia, whose book raised a controversial issue on the alleged collusion between the military and the Abu Sayyaf, had difficulty understanding Tagalog that it was impossible for her to discern what was going on.

A matter of interpretation

"Her personal experiences may be true, but her interpretation about the events and other hostages were either fed to her by the Abu Sayyaf or fed to her by other people," Recio said.

For instance, Recio noted Gracia's lighthearted account of the wedding of female hostages to Abu Sayyaf members. "That was not fair. The women were forced into the marriages at gun point," he said.

Nervous wreck

But recalling the traumatic experience and writing them down left Montealegre a nervous wreck.

"I kept having nightmares. Until now, I still have nightmares," she told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Montealegre was among the female hostages Gracia said in her book had gotten married to Abu Sayyaf bandits.

"We feel so bad that when the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) called us to meet her we declined," Montealegre said.

She said only former hostage Maria Fe Rosadeno met with Burnham last week when she came to testify at the trial of six Abu Sayyaf members who were linked to the Dos Palmas kidnapping.

Blow-by-blow account

Recio said the book would give an eyewitness blow-by-blow account on how the Abu Sayyaf managed to break through the much-vaunted military cordon in Lamitan, Basilan, on June 2, 2001. The controversy has not been fully explained, despite Senate and House inquiries into the incident.

Recio said he would also provide details of the negotiations for the release of his sister-in-law from the clutches of the Abu Sayyaf.

"Abu Sabaya was calling me every day," Recio said. The family paid P1 million for Angie's release.

He said he and the other writers would also reveal the role of the United States in a planned attempt to launch full-scale rescue operations in Basilan. "I have pictures, documents, names, everything," Recio said.

Twenty chapters

The manuscripts—all 20 chapters of them—are ready. Recio, himself the publisher of a travel magazine, said he was still looking for a publisher brave enough to get behind the book project.

Told that some of his colleagues in the Senate were not keen about another inquiry into the matter, Osmeña said he had already talked to Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, the former and present chair, respectively, of the committee on national defense, about his plan.

RECIO vows to set the record straight in his tell all book on the Dos Palmas kidnapping co-written with his wife, son and sister-in-law.

Magsaysay had chaired the national defense committee that found serious circumstantial evidence of collusion between the military and the Abu Sayyaf and recommended the court martial of three generals in 2002.

Magsaysay, Biazon and Sen. Panfilo Lacson were among the senators who said there was no need to reopen the investigation.

Military open to probe

A military official said the Armed Forces was open to a congressional reinvestigation of the escape of the bandits from the military dragnet in Lamitan.

"The position of the Armed Forces is we are as interested as everybody to let the truth come out," Maj. Gen. Edilberto Adan, AFP deputy chief of staff and spokesperson, told reporters Wednesday.

The military, more than any other government agency, wants a closure to the Lamitan siege which had embarrassed the top brass, he said.

"Our stand is that if there's an inquiry, then let the truth come out. For as long as this remains unresolved, it's bad for the morale of our soldiers in Mindanao," Adan said.

Adan, however, said that the military was standing by its assertion that its troops had never colluded with the bandits.

No credible witness

"So far there's no credible witness or evidence that says that there was collusion so we stick to our stand that none of our senior officers as alleged were involved," he said.

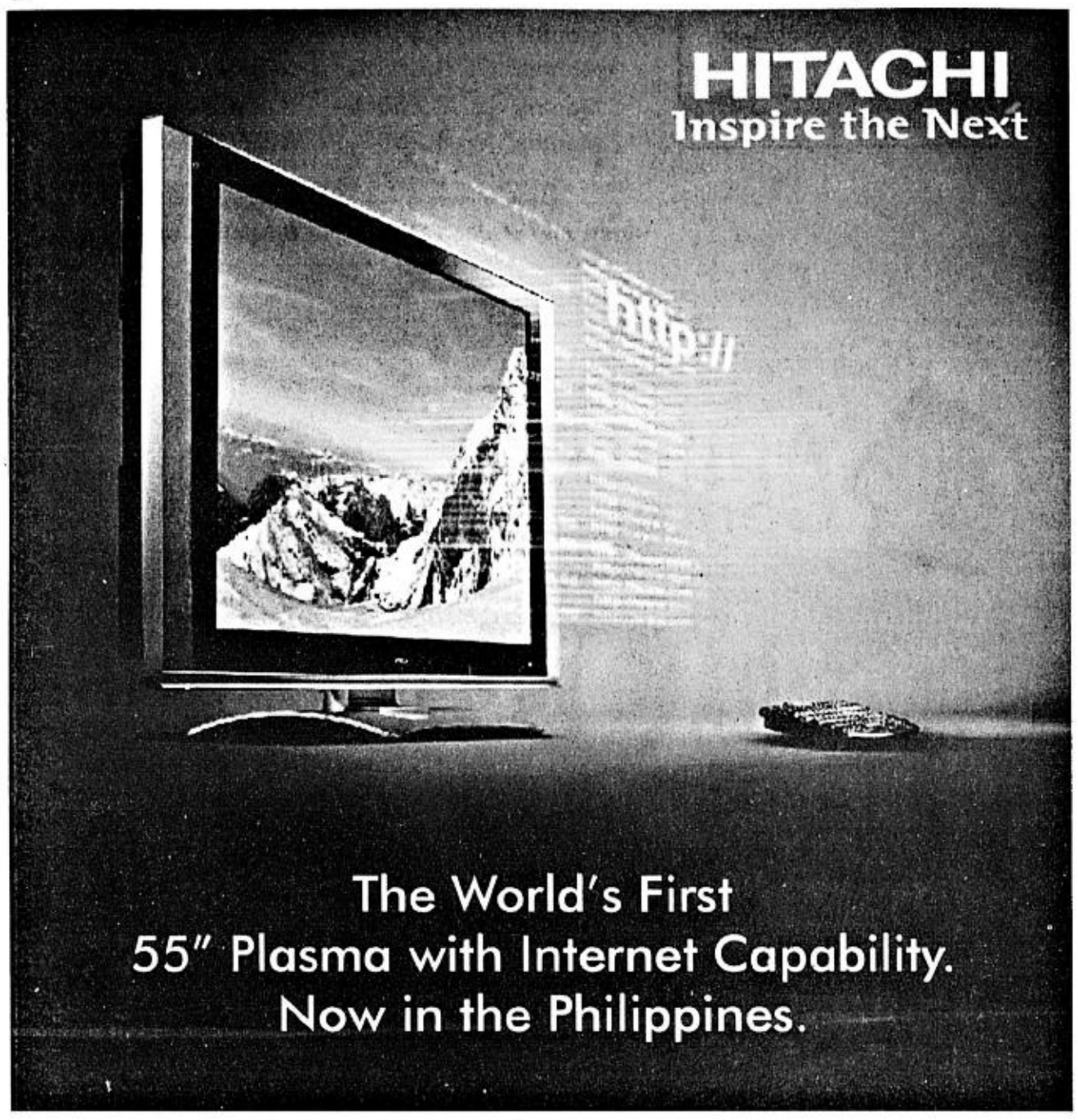
While the military is willing to take part in an inquiry, Burnham is not expected to testify again.

Saying that Burnham did not want to get entangled in a "political circus," Department of Justice officials yesterday said they doubted that the former hostage would want to come back to the country anytime soon.

Gracia testimony finished

The officials, who requested anonymity, said they doubted that Burnham would return as her court testimony against the bandits was already finished.

"She said she came back to get justice for her late husband," one official said. Her husband Martin was killed during the military rescue operations in June 2002. ***With reports from TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza***



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No end in sight to Lacson-Angara row

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE RIFT between opposition senators Edgardo Angara and Panfilo Lacson is apparently far from over.

Following media reports about his supposedly heated exchange with Lacson the other day, Angara yesterday sought to set the record straight on what he stressed was a "confidential and privileged meeting" of the minority last Monday.

Yesterday Angara elaborated on the substance of his accusations against Lacson whose suitability to join the Senate minority he had questioned during the meeting.

He said the perception of the opposition was that Lacson "sold the opposition down the river" despite his denial of the charges against him.

"But as far as many of us in the coalition are concerned, he has still got to prove that he is a member of the opposition," he said.

Lacson's Senate staff said the senator did not want to comment on Angara's latest statement.

According to Angara, the first charge against Lacson concerned information that the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino received that the senator, who was running as an independent candidate for president, had met through "third parties" with First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo during the election campaign.

Angara said that Lacson had allegedly made a promise to Arroyo that he would not personally attack President Macapagal-Arroyo during the campaign and that he would do everything to stop Fernando Poe Jr. from winning the election.

Angara claimed to have people who witnessed the meeting with Arroyo.

A second charge against Lacson concerned the source of his election funds. Angara said Lacson's chief funder, billionaire Lucio Tan, was the "No. 1 financier of Ms Arroyo."

Lastly, he said that one week before the May 10 elections, Lacson had met with the KNP and demanded P300 million and the privilege of naming one-half of the incoming Cabinet in exchange for withdrawing his candidacy.

Angara said they were on the point of agreement but Lacson made an "unreasonable" demand: that businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco make a public announcement that he was for Poe, a condition that Angara said the coalition found curious.

Because of these charges, Angara said he and other oppositionists believe Lacson had "sold the opposition down the river, and we cannot consider him a genuine member of the opposition."

At one point, Angara indirectly referred to Lacson as a "Makapili," a term used to describe Filipinos who collaborated with Japanese Occupation forces during World War II.

"During the war against the Japanese, many of us Filipinos went to the hills and fought as guerrillas but there is a group of Filipinos who collaborated with the Japanese, we call them Makapilis," he said.

"So it is up to him to explain to our people what his role was in this election, whether, as he is now claiming, he is genuine opposition," Angara said.

Commenting on the tiff between Angara and Lacson, another oppositionist, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, said that Angara was "confusing the minority in the Senate with the opposition."

Osmeña explained that a senator could be in the minority but not in the opposition.

"You should learn not to confuse the opposition with those who are on the opposition in the Senate," he said.

Osmeña said he was confident that Angara and Lacson would eventually reconcile.

"I think time will heal all wounds... I'm sure in time, both will overcome their personal animosities and think of the country and try to do what is best for the country," he said.

Neophyte Sen. Jamby Madrigal said this kind of fighting should be set aside "in order for the country to move forward."

Madrigal said what was important was for the minority group to unite and do its job as "a check and balance" against the administration.

'Interaction, not intervention'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WHEN the President does it, it's "interaction."

Malacañang yesterday called it "interaction" and not "intervention" when President Macapagal-Arroyo made a timely phone call to two allies in the House of Representatives fighting over a top committee post.

In a briefing, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said, "The President has never interfered with the internal affairs of Congress. Whatever interaction [there is] between the executive and legislative branches has something to do with moving forward in the social and economic reform agenda."

Bunye said the President merely extended "support and counsel as part of the executive-legislative partnership in the interest of the people."

A showdown between pro-administration parties Lakas-CMD and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino over the chairmanship of the ways and means committee was averted after the President called on the contending parties, Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus and Negros Oriental Rep. Herminio Teves, to split the post within their three-year term.

More officials than athletes going to Athens for Olympics

THE COST-CONSCIOUS President Macapagal-Arroyo is sending more officials than athletes in the 34-member Philippine Olympic team for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

Malacañang yesterday reported that 18 officials formed part of the contingent that will have 16 athletes competing for only six events—boxing (4), taekwondo (3), track and field (2), swimming (5), archery (1), and shooting (1)—in the prestigious world sport affair.

The non-athletes in the delegation are finance officers Benjamin Ramos Jr. and Carlos Viola; swimming team leader Francisco Rivera III and swimming coach Anthony Lozada; archery coach Henry Manalang; athletics team leader Go Teng Kok, athletic coach Joseph Sy; boxing officials Gemiliano Lopez Jr. and Manuel Lopez; shooting coach Jose Ramon Corral; and taekwondo officials Jesus Morales III, Roberto Aventajado, Tae Hyung Kim, and Sung Chun Hong.

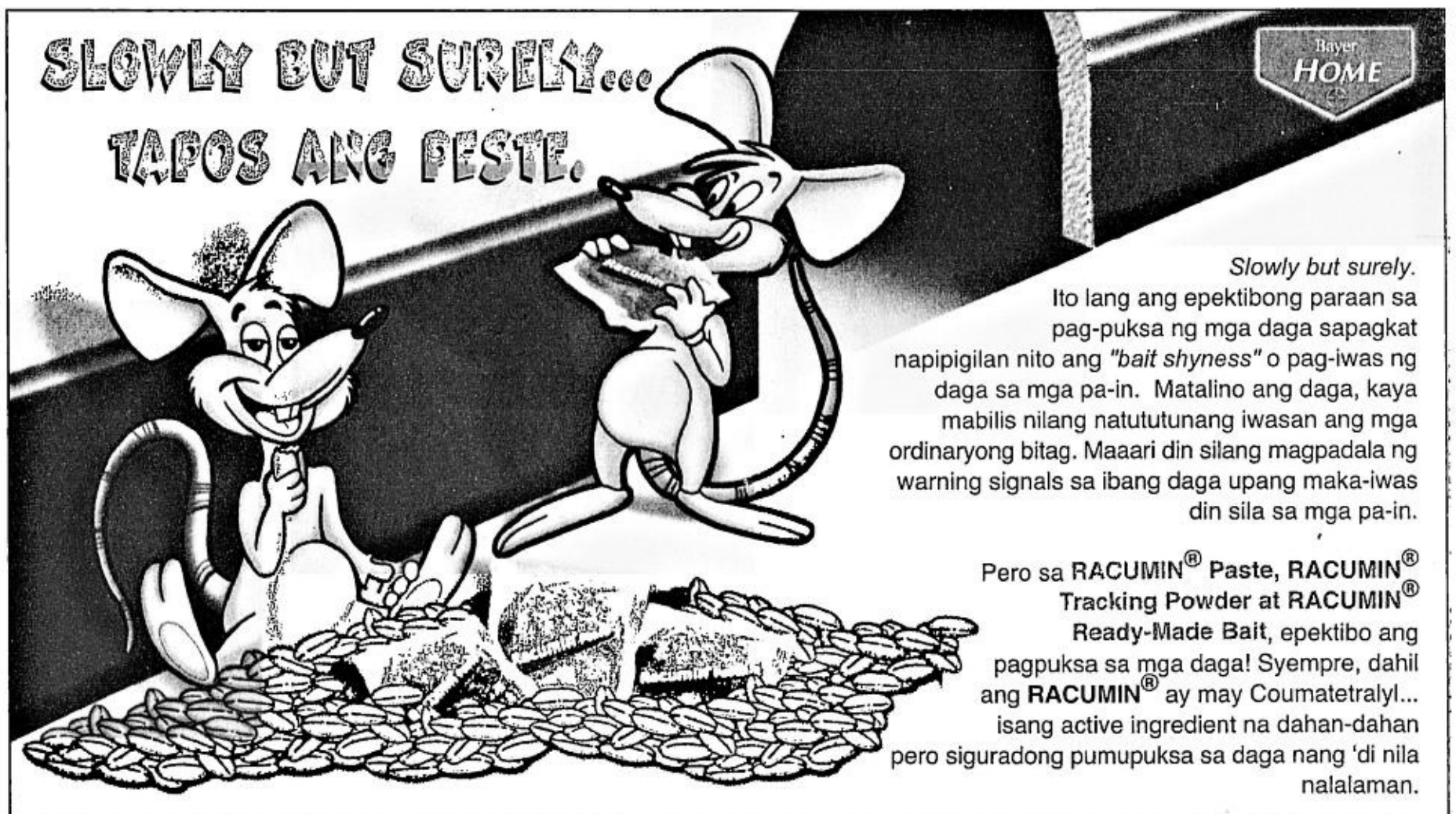
Malacañang mum

Malacañang officials were mum on how much it would be spending for the Philippine delegation to Greece which would be on top of the $1.2 million President Macapagal-Arroyo had agreed to pay for the coverage of the Athens Olympics. The President had to dip into the government's budget to help the state-owned National Broadcasting Network meet its obligations.

Members of the Philippine team were at Malacañang yesterday for a courtesy call to the President.

"I am proud to send off our small contingent to the forthcoming Olympic Games in Athens," the President said. "They sally forth in a mission of friendship and goodwill at a time when these values must take precedence in a troubled world." *(See related story on Page A25.)*

The President described the team as a "symbol of Filipino excellence and competitiveness in all fields and our commitment to the universal values."



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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

KISSING FLOWERS PART OF JOB DESCRIPTION
A pollen-covered bee comes in for landing to collect more pollen from a sunflower in a garden east of Myrtle Creek, Ore., Aug. 3. AP

Iraq suicide bomber kills 5; clashes rage in Najaf

BAGHDAD—At least five people were killed and 24 wounded in a suicide bombing outside an Iraqi police station Thursday, as fierce clashes erupted between US troops and Shiite Muslim militiamen in the city of Najaf.

Just over a week after 70 people were killed in a massive suicide blast outside a police station in Baquba, north of Baghdad, insurgents caused havoc in an early morning attack at a police post in Mahawil, south of the capital.

Five people were killed and 24 wounded when a suicide bomber blew up a minibus, an official at the health ministry said.

Gunmen drove up to the station at around 8:30 a.m. and sprayed gunfire at officers outside the building, said the source on condition of anonymity. After a brief exchange of fire, the assailants fled.

"Five minutes later, a small minibus came directly up to the police station. The policemen tried to stop it, but it exploded," said a spokesperson for the interior ministry on condition of anonymity.

"There was a suicide bomber in the minibus," he added.

Further south, heavy fighting broke out between US troops and militiamen loyal to Shiite radical leader Moqtada Sadr in the central holy city of Najaf.

US helicopters opened fire as they circled above the Najaf cemetery while the sound of heavy gunfire and mortar rounds boomed across the city, an AFP correspondent on the scene said.

The health ministry said two people were killed and eight wounded in the fighting, which flared up overnight, died down and resumed in the morning.

The US military branded the late-night clashes an "overt violation" of a truce, but there was no immediate US confirmation of the fresh battles.

Both the cemetery and the 1920 Revolution Square, where the clashes erupted, were battlegrounds during a deadly uprising waged by Sadr's forces against US troops deployed in the holy city earlier this year.

Najaf governor Adnan al-Zorfi requested back-up from US marines after the main police station was attacked at 3 a.m. for a second time in two hours with machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars, the US military said.

Sadr's Mehdi Army withdrew when the marines arrived and US troops did not open fire, said a statement. *AFP*

7 hostages' fate hangs after talks collapse

BAGHDAD—The fate of seven foreign truckers kidnapped in Iraq was unclear Wednesday after talks for their release broke down amid charges of footdragging by their Kuwaiti employer, a mediator said Thursday.

The drivers—three Indians, three Kenyans and an Egyptian —were kidnapped July 21 by a group calling itself "Holders of the Black Banners."

Their captors have threatened them with execution unless the Kuwaiti company withdraws from Iraq.

The group stayed execution threats three times and appointed tribal chief Sheikh Hisham al-Dulaimi to mediate on its behalf with the governments of the hostages and their employers, Kuwait Gulf and Link Transport.

"I do not mind getting back to the negotiating table as the Indian and Egyptian embassies have called me to restart the talks with the kidnappers," Dulaimi said, after the kidnappers dismissed him from the talks Sunday.

The Iraqi go-between blamed the Kuwaiti company for the delay in the release of the hostages. "The Kuwaiti company is taking too long to decide on the kidnappers' demand," he said.

The kidnappers demanded that the company abandon its operations in Iraq and also compensate victims of US raids in the flashpoint city of Fallujah, scarred by persistent clashes between American forces and insurgents.

"I am now waiting for the kidnappers to authorize me again as a mediator and proceed with the talks," Dulaimi said.

Dulaimi withdrew from the talks after the kidnappers and the company failed to arrive at a decision.

He said he had received a letter Sunday signed by the commander of the group asking him to withdraw. The kidnappers would then take the "appropriate measures with regard to the hostages," he quoted the letter as saying. *AFP*

Fresh intel triggered US security alerts—White House

WASHINGTON—The heightened US security alert is based on new data pointing to contacts by al-Qaida operatives with persons in the United States, the White House and media reports said Wednesday, as top officials defended heightened security at financial institutions.

"Very current and recent activity on the part of al-Qaida" has left little doubt that the terrorist organization is moving toward the execution stage of attacks on US soil, an unnamed senior intelligence official told The New York Times.

"All the information wasn't from one source; there was new information that was introduced late Friday night," the Department of Homeland Security official told the Times on condition of anonymity.

In a separate report Wednesday, CNN quoted unnamed sources as saying there was proof al-Qaida operatives in Pakistan had contacted at least six people in the United States, and that at least one of the contacts was in recent months.

Reports that the heightened security level was based on dated computer information brought stinging criticism to the White House, which had acknowledged most of the data was tied to al-Qaida surveillance of potential targets at least three years ago.

But White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said Wednesday, "There is another new stream of intelligence that came to our attention on Friday."

"I can't go further into it because it could compromise some ongoing operations at this point," McClellan told reporters with US President George W. Bush on a campaign trip.

The Homeland Security official quoted by the Times gave the same reason for declining to provide details of the new information, saying only that the data strongly reinforced the sense of alarm raised by CIA reports concerning computer disks recently seized in Pakistan.

The computer data, seized after the arrest of a top al-Qaida suspect in Pakistan, was said to include surveillance on US buildings before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington.

The five targets cited by US officials in elevating the threat level were the New York Stock Exchange and Citigroup, Prudential Finance in Newark, New Jersey, and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington. *AFP*

LETOURNEAU REUTERS

Gibraltar happy with 300 years under British rule

GIBRALTAR—Gibraltar's political leadership told Spain on Wednesday to keep its "hands off our rock," as the strategic Mediterranean territory celebrated 300 years under British rule with fireworks and military pomp.

A motion unanimously passed in parliament pledged "to resist and oppose" any transfer of Gibraltar's sovereignty to Spain, which has long claimed the tiny territory off its southern coast at the entrance to the Mediterranean.

The involvement of British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon and the head of the Royal Navy in Gibraltar's celebrations has irked Madrid, which accused Britain of clinging to its imperial past.

But Gibraltar was defiant as it marked the anniversary of the day in 1704 that British forces helped capture the land of just 6.5 square km.

"We are proud of our history and make no apology for it," chief minister Peter Caruana told parliament.

People dressed in the red and white colors of Gibraltar held hands for 15 minutes, forming a human chain around the Rock in defense of what they see as their birthright. The organizers estimated that 17,000 of the population of 30,000 took part.

Spain ceded Gibraltar to Britain by the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, but has never given up its claim to the territory. Nearly 99 percent of the population rejected sharing sovereignty with Spain in a November 2002 referendum.

In parliament, MPs backed the motion which asserted "the inalienable right to self-determination of the people of Gibraltar" which precludes both Britain and Spain "from negotiating our future other than at our request and with our consent."

Liberal leader Joseph Garcia said it was time for Spaniards to realize "that they lost Gibraltar 300 years ago. Times have moved on. Our future can only be decided by ourselves, A small colonial people cannot be bullied by Spain."

"This is our homeland, and absolutely no one has the right to discuss our future unless we so desire," added opposition leader Joe Bossano said.

But Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero made it clear that his country was not abandoning its historic claim. *AFP*

British antiterror raids bag 12

LONDON—Suspects arrested in antiterror raids earlier this week had been planning to attack UK airports including Heathrow, Britain's main air hub, several British newspapers reported Thursday.

Several published reports said one of the 12 suspects, variously identified as Abu Eisa al-Hindi or Abu Musa al-Hindi, was believed to be a senior member of al-Qaida.

Metropolitan Police refused to say whether al-Hindi was among those arrested.

The reports said al-Hindi, using the codename Bilal, had been in contact with Mohammad Naeem Noor Khan, a computer expert arrested in Pakistan last month for alleged links to extremists.

Police arrested 13 young men in a series of raids across England on Tuesday, but have said nothing officially about what they were suspected of doing.

One man was released Wednesday, while police continued to question the others at a high-security police station in west London.

London's Metropolitan Police has said the arrests were part of "continuing and extensive inquiries by police and the Security Service into alleged international terrorism."

Officials have refused to say whether the raids were linked to information Pakistani authorities recently said they had uncovered about threats to Britain and the United States.

The Times newspaper quoted an unidentified Pakistani intelligence official as saying that al-Hindi was believed to have been in the final stages of planning an attack on Heathrow. *AP*

Teacher-rapist freed; victim seeks reunion

SEATTLE, Washington—The former schoolboy lover of US teacher Mary Kay Letourneau asked Wednesday to be reunited with her just hours after she was released from a 7 1/2 year jail sentence.

The former elementary school mistress, 42, was quietly released from the Washington Corrections Center for Women near the northwestern city of Seattle early Wednesday, amid speculation over whether she would meet her former pupil again.

But lawyers for Vili Fualaau, 21, who fathered two of Letourneau's children after the two began an affair when he was just 12, filed a motion asking a Seattle court to allow the couple to meet again.

The couple is barred from seeing each other by the court order, imposed after Letourneau was convicted of child rape in 1997 after seducing her young student the previous year.

But Fualaau, who says he still loves his one-time teacher, moved to break the deadlock by instructing his lawyer to file documents asking to be allowed to see her to discuss their two children.

"He is now an adult and, as an adult, is requesting that the court allow him to associate with other adults of his own choosing, specifically Mary K. Letourneau," the motion states.

The document, filed with King County District Court, says the young man is not threatened by Letourneau and that the only basis for criminal charges was Fualaau's age at the time of the offense.

Fualaau told a Seattle television station late Tuesday that he still loved Letourneau. "I'm kinda nervous, I don't know what my feelings are right now, but I do know that I do love her," he told KING-TV.

Prison officials went to great lengths to avoid a media feeding frenzy when she was released from jail shortly after midnight, hours earlier than expected.

They even sent a car carrying a lookalike out of the front gates as Letourneau was slipped quietly out through another exit. *AFP*

Photojournalist Cartier-Bresson, 95

PARIS—Veteran French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who has died at the age of 95, was a co-founder of the Magnum photo agency and a pioneer in the art of photojournalism.

Born Aug. 22, 1908 to a bourgeois family in a small town east of Paris, Cartier-Bresson took up photography in the 1930s after first studying painting.

Shooting only black-and-white film, shunning artificial light and refusing to crop his pictures, he is seen by critics as one of the generation of photographers responsible for elevating what had been a hobby or a profession into a fully-fledged art form.

His personal contribution was to combine the notion of the "Decisive Moment"—the name he gave to a major collection of his work in 1952—with the meticulous eye for design and proportion that he learned from his studies with painter Andre Lhote in the 1920s.

The "Decisive Moment," he said in an oft-quoted line, "is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as the precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression."

In other words, being at the right place at the right time, of course with his trusted Leica at the ready.

A student of the Surrealists, a movement at its height in the Paris of the 1920s, Cartier-Bresson shared their view of the unpredictability of significance.

With the unobtrusive and fast-shooting cameras that became available from the 1930s, he was permanently on the look-out for arresting images, blazing the trail for generations of photojournalists to come.

Rebellious by nature, Cartier-Bresson left his studies in 1931 for colonial Africa where he spent a year as a hunter and took his first pictures, few of which have survived.

Returning to France he came to realize the possibilities of the camera, acquired the Leica and began—in his words—"prowling the streets... determined to trap life, to preserve life in the act of living."

Before the war he worked in eastern Europe, Spain and Mexico and collaborated with film director Jean Renoir. Imprisoned by the Germans in 1940, he escaped three years later and was on hand for the liberation of Paris, 60 years ago this month.

In 1947 he joined two colleagues at the newspaper Ce Soir, Robert Capa and David Seymour, to found Magnum Photos, which for decades set the standard for photographic reportage around the world. Cartier-Bresson was there at the birth of Communism in China and the murder of Mahatma Gandhi in India.

Among the famous names who have sat for him are Jean-Paul Sartre, Henri Matisse, Edith Piaf and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. He left Magnum in 1966 to concentrate on portraiture, landscapes and drawing. *AFP*

CARTIER-BRESSON is pictured in a September 1989 photo. REUTERS

JI seen shifting to assassinations in lieu of strikes

JAKARTA—Shifting tactics, an al-Qaida-linked group that staged the deadliest post-Sept. 11 terror bombing is believed to be planning assassinations of Western and regional leaders in Asia, moving away from large-scale strikes against civilian targets, officials said.

Increasingly isolated and on the run, Jemaah Islamiyah's capabilities have been eroded by dozens of arrests, a shortage of funds and divisions within its leadership.

As a result, the group isn't focusing on coordinated attacks like the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings that killed 202 people and the 2003 suicide bombing of the J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta, which killed 12 people, officials said.

"The threat has been contained but it is still there and has not been eliminated completely," said Zainal Abidin Zain, director general of Southeast Asia's US-backed antiterror center in Malaysia.

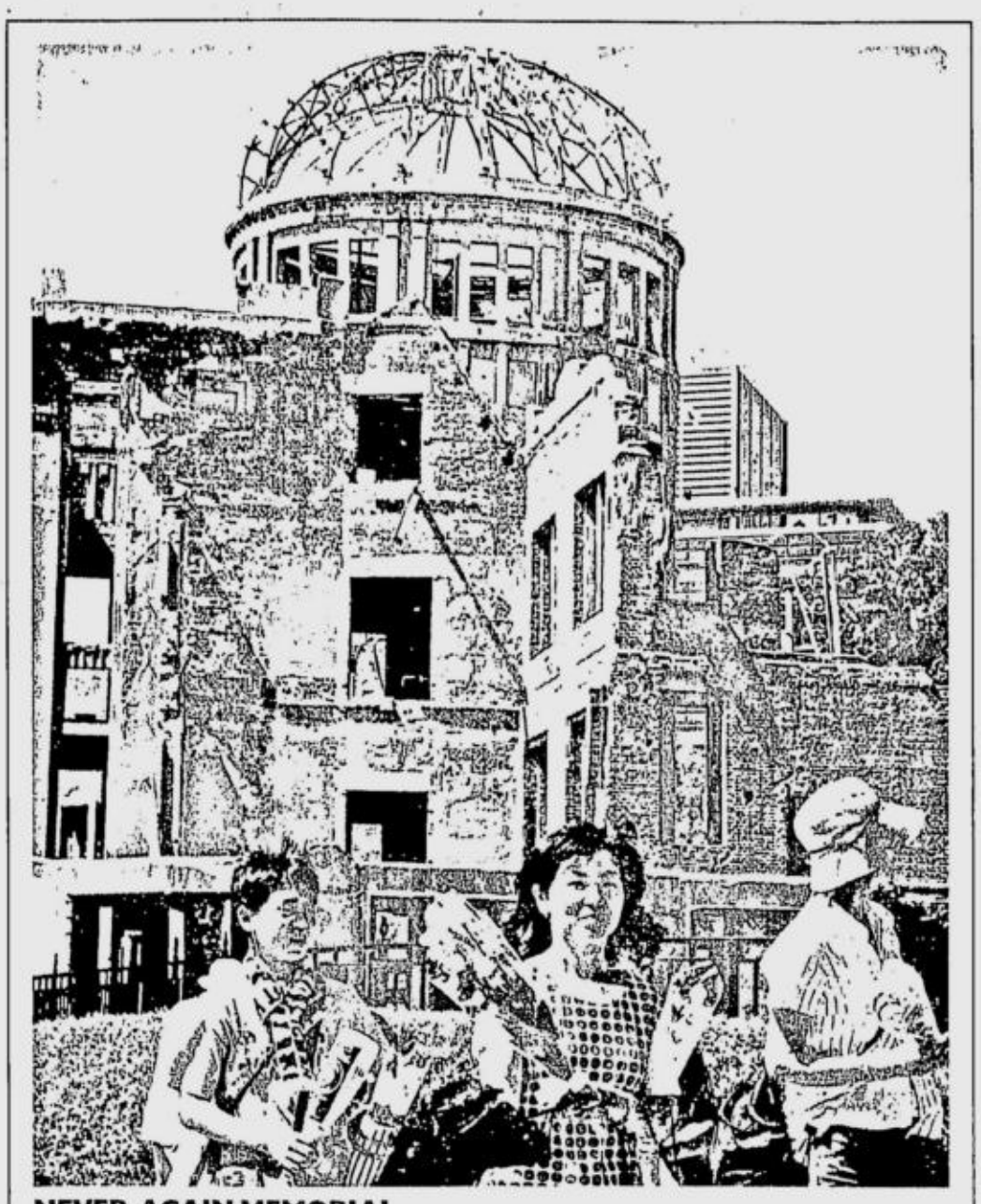
Jemaah Islamiyah remains the most dangerous terror group in Southeast Asia. But the Marriott bombing was the last large-scale attack attributed to the group. Some security officials suggest the arrests of key members—including Hambali, the group's alleged operations chief—has stripped it of the ability to strike big anytime soon.

Remnants of Jemaah Islamiyah have tried to regroup in Indonesia so they could launch more strikes, a Malaysian government official said on condition of anonymity. But they were hindered by the absence of a strong leader like Hambali, he said.

"There is no one of Hambali's caliber to step in and take over," another Malaysia security official said, also speaking on condition of anonymity.

Jemaah Islamiyah's alleged leader, Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, is jailed in Indonesia awaiting trial on allegations that he ordered the Marriott attack and other charges. An Afghan-trained Indonesian who goes by the name Zulkarnaen replaced Hambali as operations chief after his arrest last August, authorities say.

The group still has an estimated 2,000 operatives throughout Southeast Asia thanks to a recruiting drive. But the organization has been infiltrated by informants, doesn't have enough money and faces a public increasingly intolerant of terrorism, according to Sidney Jones, a terrorism expert who has studied Jemaah Islamiyah. *AP*



NEVER-AGAIN MEMORIAL
A family holding flowers walks in front of the A-bomb Dome as they prepare to offer prayers for A-bomb victims at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, western Japan Aug. 5. The 59th annual memorial service for the A-bomb victims will be held today. AFP

Thai premier accused of strongman rule

BANGKOK—Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra shot back Thursday at stinging accusations by a human rights commission that Thailand's civil liberties had deteriorated and a "culture of authoritarianism" had emerged under his tenure.

Thailand's National Human Rights Commission, in its first report since it was set up three years ago, said the government had committed gross rights violations, particularly through a deadly war on drugs, in its quest to promote state power.

"Thailand is worryingly regressing toward a culture of authoritarianism, instead of progressing to a culture of human rights," said the commission report.

Thaksin responded by urging the commission, made up mainly of academics, lawyers and human rights advocates, to exercise its independence and creativity but "not to act in opposition."

"You can introduce but do not criticize," Thaksin said. "When you criticize, it goes around the world and damages the country." In its 230-page report, the commission warned that freedom of expression and criticism of government were viewed as undermining stability, prosperity and economic development.

"The worst case is the extra-judicial killings in the war on drugs," the report said. "More than 2,500 people were killed without fair trials under the principles of democracy and rule of law."

The government's drugs campaign, which began in February 2003 and ended in December of that year, logged at least 2,275 extrajudicial killings in the first three months, according to the US-based group Human Rights Watch.

Thaksin, who is expected to seek re-election early next year, has largely blamed the deaths on inter-gang violence and on Thursday stood by police and other security agencies that had been accused of extrajudicial killings.

"There is no government support of killing innocent people," Thaksin said.

"Sometimes authorities have to undertake self-defense measures, but the extra-judicial killings were done by others. The government does everything based on the constitution."

Thaksin's administration also came under fire for blurring the lines between state and private economic business.

"Major business groups in and outside the country are throwing their weight behind key government policies while state officials are giving less acknowledgement to human rights," the report said.

"The media have also been restrained by business interests while so-called independent constitutional bodies have been interfered with (by politicians)." *AFP*

West Nile virus kills 2, infects dozens in California

GRAND TERRACE, California—Californians are spraying pesticide around their homes, calling the kids and dogs in at dusk and replacing ratty old window screens—all prevention methods to combat a scourge the rest of the nation knows only too well: the West Nile virus.

The response to the first two deaths in California from the rapidly spreading virus appears to be more prevention than panic, with few reports that the mosquito-borne illness is causing people to cancel outdoor plans or make drastic lifestyle changes.

"We're taking precautions, but you can only do so much," said David Wilson, 61, a neighbor of Morris Sternberg, the 75-year-old man who died Saturday from encephalitis caused by the virus.

As of Wednesday, West Nile had infected 79 people in the state, mostly in Southern California, according to the Department of Health Services. Last year, there were only three cases statewide and no deaths.

Sternberg, a real estate agent in the small city of Grand Terrace, was the second person in California to die of the illness within a six-week period. Neighbors suspect he was bitten on his front porch, where he often sat in a hammock.

West Nile, which first hit the United States in 1999 in New York, has killed more than 560 people in the United States in the past five years as it marched westward. Last year was the first for the virus to appear in areas west of the Continental Divide.

This year, West Nile has sickened more than 400 people across the country and resulted in seven deaths, according to data released Wednesday by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The virus killed 262 people in the United States last year, from 9,858 overall cases.

California officials are telling residents what East coasters have long done: Avoid mosquitos by eliminating pools of stagnant water, wear long sleeves if outside at dusk or dawn, and use mosquito repellant that contains the chemical known as DEET. *AP*

A SUDANESE family in Morni camp waits Aug. 4 for humanitarian aid, along with thousands of other displaced people in the camp 80 km from Aljinena, capital of western Darfur region. AP

African Union considers peacekeepers for Darfur

NAIROBI—The African Union said Wednesday it may send a 2,000-strong peacekeeping force to the war-ravaged Sudanese region of Darfur, as tens of thousands marched through Khartoum to warn foreign armies not to intervene in the crisis.

Aid agencies meanwhile said the misery of over one million victims of continuing violence in the western region of Sudan was likely to be worsened by the coming rainy season.

With Sudan's army vowing to fight "the enemies of the Sudan on land, sea and air," over Darfur, tens of thousands of Sudanese protesters marched on UN offices in Khartoum to show their opposition to any outside intervention.

They shouted "Allah o Akbar (God Is Greatest)" and waved banners in English and Arabic proclaiming "Darfur Is the Graveyard of US" and "No to Foreign Intervention."

The AU said it was considering bolstering what was planned to be a 300-strong contingent to protect ceasefire observers and monitors, deploying instead a 2,000-man mission.

Nigeria will dispatch one battalion to join the force, Nigerian Foreign Minister Olu Adeniji said, but added when had yet to be decided because the AU was still working on logistics.

The United Nations, has called the situation in Darfur the world's worst humanitarian crisis, said it would send a team to Ethiopia to help the African Union set up their force.

"I have decided to send a team, a UN team, to Addis Ababa, to work with the African Union on its requirements, on its needs, and how to assist with structuring the force..." Secretary General Kofi Annan said. *AFP*

Judge: Cellphone craze may spur more robberies

SYDNEY—An Australian judge said Thursday that teenagers wanting the latest in mobile phone fashions could soon spur more robberies than drugs.

With the cost of new generation mobile handsets rising and young people wanting to keep up with trends, Judge David Robin said he fears the emergence of a new trend.

"I bet that will be the new trend—stealing money to finance mobile phones rather than drugs," Robin said.

The judge made the comments when sentencing a 17-year-old boy who, along with other juveniles, was involved in stealing $30,000 (US$21,000) in cash and goods.

The boy's lawyer said his client used part of the proceeds to buy and operate a mobile phone.

"For the first time in my experience it appears the acquiring and financing of mobile phones is the motivation for the offense," Robin said. "I'm fearful it is the start of a trend.

"The usual explanation is the need to finance indulgence in drugs, which appears not to be so in your case," he told the teenager.

The teenager pleaded guilty to breaking into a clothing store and a house last year and stealing $3,000 worth of clothes, $15,000 in cash and $12,000 worth of jewelry.

Aside from the often prohibitive cost of mobile phones, teenagers often find themselves saddled with huge bills.

The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association wants students to be taught consumer tips to avoid racking up large mobile phone debts.

"For a lot of kids under 18, (the mobile phone) is the first significant purchase they make," the association's policy officer Ian Booth said.

"We want to encourage (teens) to use the phone in a way that it is affordable. Really, it is a question of financial skills, savings, budgeting and spending, but it is also a question of attitude."

Booth said students should study mobile phone contracts, call charges and be given advice to avoid mobile phone theft. *AFP*

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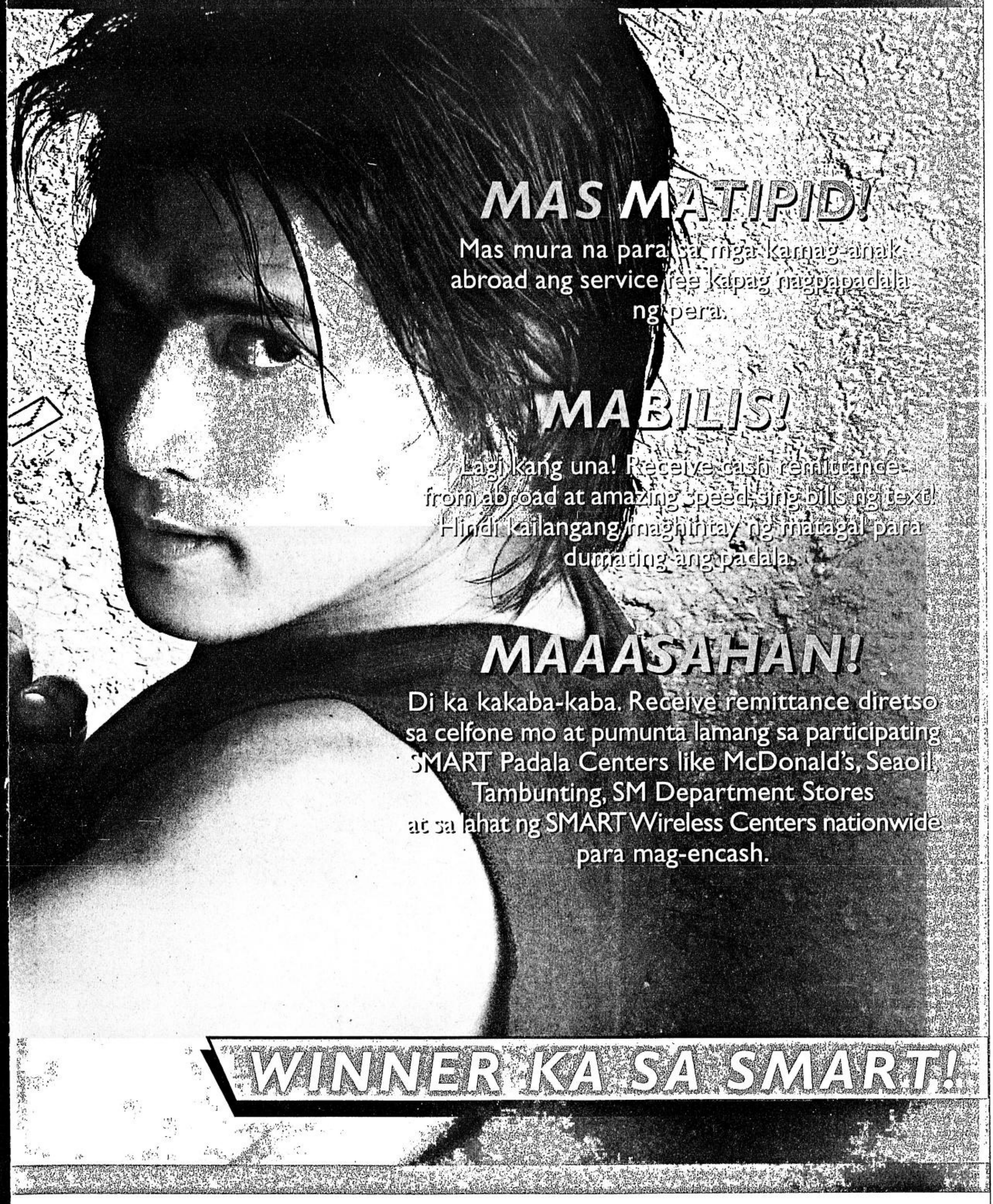

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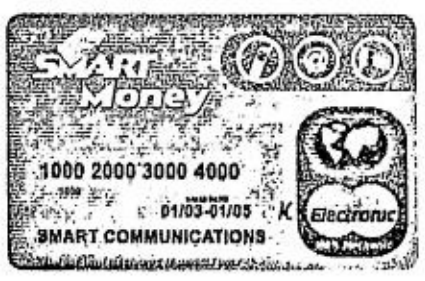

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OPINION

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Are we safer now?

EDITORIAL

HE who wants peace must prepare for war, a Roman philosopher once counseled. This imperial maxim has been followed by the United States as it has been followed by all empires at all times.

It has also been true, however, of America that it has wrestled with the imperial urge to manufacture causes for war and the democratic imperative of only resorting to war when attacked. That is why, throughout its long history, America was often content to be a bully in the Americas and a pacifist when it came to the rest of the world. World Wars I and II showed America at its best, fighting only when provoked. But then this gave way to the constant series of expansionist aggression that came to such a bloody and inglorious end, it seemed, at Vietnam. America, with some exceptions, then returned to its more democratic tendencies.

The turn of this new century has seen, as the turn of the last century saw, renewed aggression cloaked in the highest terms, but clearly of a neoimperial bent, led by a Republican administration under George W. Bush just as it had been led by a Republican, Theodore Roosevelt, a century ago. The difference seems to be that Roosevelt was a much brighter man, with a more finely honed sense of statecraft than Bush II. Besides which America faces—and has faced—direct retribution on its shores at the hands of its enemies.

The question the world, along with America, faces, as a consequence of Bush's policy of aggressive war, is: Are we, and the Americans, safer for it?

In recent days, Americans faced renewed tensions over revelations from the highest circles that there's danger of imminent attack. Boston, Washington and New York were placed on heightened alert, the military was put on an advanced war footing, and the specter of attack hung once more over the daily lives of Americans.

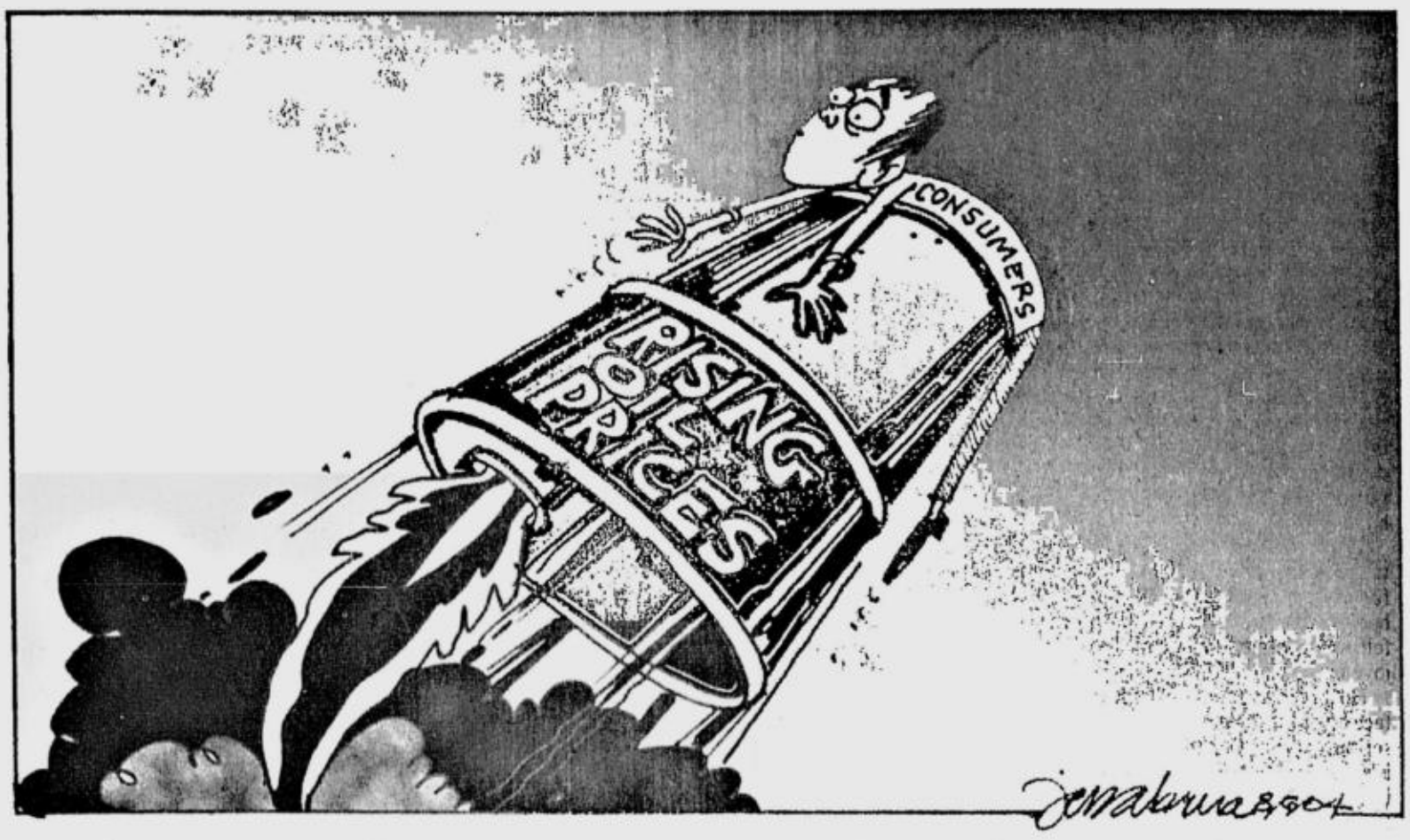
Then, as The New York Times and other papers began to point out, there emerged the possibility that the dire warnings were based on old information. Information that has been there for some time, and which has then led to respected media circles wondering if this could all be just a political act.

In recent months American officials, as the political campaign season has heated up, have muttered dark thoughts about a potential disruption of the November elections. We pointed out, when this possibility was raised, that it smacked of the no-election scenarios so beloved of our military establishment here at home. Other commentators said that the apparent "Filipinization" of American politics, which began with the disreputable 2001 Florida elections, and continued with the Schwarzenegger victory in California, seems to be taking a firm hold on American shores. Jokes aside, the fact that at a time when the American people are almost equally, and violently, split between the two leading parties, the Republican-led federal government can seemingly set the stage for a no-election scenario, is disturbing to an increasing number of American commentators.

George W. Bush said, to paraphrase Woodrow Wilson, that the war on terror is meant to make the world safe for democracy (American-style, at least). After initially going into Afghanistan in a move widely applauded by the world as a just waging of war, Bush then diverted the American effort to Iraq which was neither in the front line nor capable of even being a key player in the struggle between al-Qaida and the American government.

Most serious analysts agree that an attack could happen in America at any time. An increasing number of them, on either side of the political fence, deplore the fact that politics of the most crude and cynical nature seems to be blurring the line between real and imagined threats. We are hard-pressed to find an example of a global power afflicted by such delusional and paranoiac behavior at the top since the Russia of Stalin and the China of Mao. And yet this is supposedly the free, responsible, democracy of America.

After the official end of the war, the world is not safer. America is not safer. And we, having clung to America's coattails for so long, are hardly safer. The instrument of liberation for the American people is in their hands alone. But as for us, we must take a long, hard look, and figure out how we can prevent being dragged into a worsening geopolitical situation.



Are we edging closer to another dictatorship?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

MORE and more, we are inexorably going back to a martial law regime. The government has banned, just like Ferdinand Marcos did, protest demonstrations by the people, a right that is guaranteed by the Constitution. It was this expression of public outrage that made possible the present government and the ascent of our present leaders. Were it not for the 1986 People Power Revolution, Marcos and Imelda would still be holding all of us by the crotch, and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would probably be one of his sycophants, not the President.

Now President Arroyo is following in Marcos' footsteps by telling the judiciary what to do. GMA may not realize it, but she is not a dictator—or not yet, anyway, although she really is working double time to get there. She cannot dictate on an independent and co-equal branch of government. The executive department has neither authority nor power over the judiciary. God help us if we, or the judiciary itself, allow Malacañang to bamboozle us in the administration of justice. Can you imagine what the present gang can do if the Supreme Court just folded up in a corner and accepted the dictates of politicians? The Supreme Court is our last defense against injustice. The Court abdicated that duty during the Marcos regime, and look what happened to us.

Malacañang had the temerity to order the courts not to touch economic cases "in which they have no expertise," especially the recent approval by the Energy Regulatory Commission of power rate increases.

"I don't think (Malacañang) can tell the courts what to do," retorted a Supreme Court spokesperson.

Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban, defending court decisions nullifying contracts, said the Constitution gave the courts the duty to decide cases involving grave abuse of discretion in any branch of government, including the executive and legislative departments. The courts cannot abdicate that duty, he said. He defined "grave abuse of discretion" as any action done "contrary to the Constitution, the law or jurisprudence."

"It's all a matter of protecting public interest," he continued. "The Constitution imposes this intervention as a duty, not just as a power or authority. A power can be relinquished, but a duty cannot, under any circumstances, be evaded."

Had not the Court of Appeals intervened in the ERC decision, we would be paying higher power rates now. It said in effect that there was undue haste in the ERC approval of rate increases, that the increases were approved without going through Meralco's financial statements, and therefore ordered the ERC to let the Commission on Audit go over them.

But for performing its duty, the judiciary is being dictated upon by Malacañang to keep its hands off contracts with the government. But it is no secret that it is in these contracts that corrupt public officials and businessmen are robbing the people blind.

* * *

The untold hardships that the continued rise in fuel prices will foist on Filipinos, on the other hand, can be traced to the timidity of the Supreme Court in striking down the Oil Deregulation Law. Deregulation was intended to dismantle the monopoly of the three big oil companies on the domestic downstream oil industry by opening it to free enterprise. Competition among many players will allow free market forces to dictate prices, not the whims and greed of the monopoly. But the new competitors should have been given enough time to establish themselves to be able to compete effectively with the giants.

However, then President Fidel V. Ramos made the Oil Deregulation Law a farce by giving the transition period from a regulated to a deregulated industry only a few months. During the transition period, price controls are supposed to continue while the new players try to establish themselves. This usually takes many years, as other countries that also deregulated their oil industries know. But Ramos, perhaps due to the lobby of the oil oligopoly here, made our Oil Deregulation Law a sham.

Total deregulation was imposed prematurely, before the new players could effectively compete with the giants. They were "competitors" in name only. In reality, they became members of the oligopoly, buying finished products from the giants and reselling them to the public at prices set by the three leaders.

For years, then Rep. Enrique Garcia (now governor of Bataan) waged a lonely fight to have the law declared unconstitutional because it violated the constitutional provision against monopolies and restraint of trade. But the Supreme Court, after initially siding with Garcia, made a surprising turnabout and refused to strike it down, on the flimsy excuse that it was a "judgment call" of Congress.

Now we are reaping the whirlwind of that timidity.

But all is not lost. Garcia filed a motion for reconsideration with the Supreme Court and a bill in the House to either repeal or amend the law. For some strange reason, they have been frozen in these branches of government.

Because of the inexorable rise in fuel prices, it is time for them to be taken out of the freezer. Now is the time for the Supreme Court to exercise again its constitutional duty to protect the public interest.

* * *

The death of former Sen. Arturo M. Tolentino closes the era of great legislators that saw the likes of Claro M. Recto, Jose P. Laurel, Lorenzo Tañada, Jose W. Diokno and Juan and Lorenzo Sumulong matching wits and statesmanship in the Senate. That was the golden era of our legislature.

Now who do we have in the Senate? What a contrast!

Free spirits and the peril of standardized tests

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

THIS weekend, thousands of hopeful high school seniors will troop to UP testing centers all over the country to vie for a coveted place in the next entering class of our national university—and take an entrance exam that has changed the lives of many UP students who came before them. These seniors will most probably take a few more of these entrance tests in other schools for good measure, given the long odds of making it to the top 3,700 who enter Diliman out of 65,000 aspirants.

The best and the brightest who make it never cease to amaze me, if not for the brilliance that they promise, at least for their carefree attitude to a life that has given them so much. Each year, however, I dread the ominous feeling that standardized tests may have actually eliminated many bright, young, exciting minds, and that perhaps the future Filipino Albert Einstein, Neils Bohr, Amartya Sen or John Steinbeck might not have made the cut and ended up elsewhere (and horrors, across Katipunan Avenue in a Jesuit enclave!).

Each year, too, when the admissions list is released, the UP president is deluged with appeals from parents who know best what is best for their children. Yet the UP Board of Regents has for the past decade outlawed all appeals and turned away many of the nation's finest.

Let us then take a look at the persistent power of exams—be they college admissions, the CPA or medical boards, or the bar exams—over life's joys and agonies.

It is said that when the United States conquered the Philippines more than a hundred years ago, their strongest selling point with the natives was that they offered equal and open access to government careers and the professions—foremost, through free basic education for all and, when the natives had been safely pacified, through subsidized university education. It would have been unthinkable, under the feudal personalistic system under Spanish rule, for poor, dark, flat-nosed indios to compete on equal terms with the well-born, and win solely on the basis of their own brains and industry. The meritocratic system changed all that, and opened a whole universe of possibilities to parents and children dreaming of a better life for themselves.

That, indeed, is the first function of standardized exams: to provide a uniform and objective measure, which guarantees to all the ringing promise best captured in the American Declaration of Independence: "that all men [and women] are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights." It is that equal opportunity to strive for one's dream that the University of the Philippines has offered to many poor and middle-class Filipino teenagers. One look at the UP's roster of alumni greats would show that many of them came from humble origins, and may not have thrived had it not been for the opportunities available from the national university.

But over the decades we have witnessed a sea change in thinking. "Merit," it turns out, was not as neutral and objective as we had thought. It takes the most contrived fiction of law, given today's extremes in poverty and wealth, to say that the poor and malnourished can contend on equal footing with the rich and well-fed. Worse, tests can be calibrated deliberately to recognize certain skills and ignore others and, as John Rawls' Theory of Justice tells us, can actually carry out societal biases and preferences.

Standardized tests may also favor what corporate visionary Lee Iacocca referred to as the "beancounters," those who, in the words of my favorite scene from "Wayne's World," never fail to "cross their t's and dot their lower case j's." While such exams may have helped select the mandarin elites for Chinese emperors, in today's world, they merely end up winnowing out our dreamers and seers, while the future bureaucrats and clerks have a ball (in their fashion) taking the exam. It rewards those who are skilled at test taking, though thoroughly inept at living life. One cartoon shows a school guidance counselor saying to an anxious kid, "Congratulations! Test results show that you have the aptitude for taking aptitude exams!" (On a related point, significantly, a Singaporean study showed that their finest entrepreneurs all studied abroad, and that none of them had a purely homegrown education.)

What have American colleges done? They do not rely solely on quantifiable scores, but take into account many subjective measures, like admissions essays, recommendations and extra-curricular records of applicants. They recognize that there are so many competencies needed to succeed in the ever changing job market, and that no single exam can claim to be the ultimate gauge of talent, and that, as UP president Francisco Nemenzo Jr. has said, the most valued skill today is the ability to learn on one's own and to teach oneself.

But Manila's culture is vastly different, and UP's standardized admission test serves yet another function: to block improper pressure from congressmen, senators and Cabinet men who seek favors from a state university whose budget they control. Subjective measures can always be challenged, and gray areas open the door to personal discretion, but "Now we can leave the blame to the computer." There is a certain magic in citing numbers, so categorical, so certain and so sure, that they preclude all further challenge.

Testing and evaluation is a highly specialized professional field. Standardized exams are judged by their power to predict the performance of students in the school they seek to enter. That much the numbers can judge, and no more. Beyond that, those who win the admissions lottery must be judged by their transformative power, because from those to whom much has been given, much is expected in return.

* * *

Comments to raul.pangalangan@up.edu.ph

Keeping their balance

COMMENTARY

Mia Corazon A. Aureus
Institute on Church and Social Issues

BALANCING myself on the two-inch steel beam of the railroad track in Muntinlupa, I waited for the Indian documentary filmmaker, Subash Day, to finish his last interview with Mang Rolly, one of the Sucat residents living along the *riles*.

The interview was taking a bit longer than the previous ones, and I can be quite impatient sometimes. So instead of just standing there and watching them, I decided to walk further toward Buli, where I was told the two railroad tracks merged. I looked at the houses I passed, craning my neck sometimes to get a view of the second-floor rooms through the open windows. But all I could see were calendars posted on the walls. When my neck started to stiffen, I gave it up and focused on what I could find in front of me.

Well, there were mini vegetable and flower gardens, chicken coops, unwashed red-orange plastic containers with fish scales still sticking on the sides, flies flitting from one fish scale to another, upturned trolleys, a signboard that said "Patubig ni Othana" and a pile of garbage being burned.

I stopped when a trolley drove by on the other track. I looked at the teenage driver and wondered how long he had been doing that job. And not just how many hours during the day but also how many years.

Earlier that afternoon, when our group came to the area, we rode the trolley. I found it rather fun and interesting. I sat comfortably on the bamboo seat and smiled at the people we passed by. It felt like the game of "*kotse-kotsehan*" that I enjoyed so much as a kid.

However, as I looked at the teenage driver, his face dripping with sweat, his lips taut and his eyes serious, I realized it was not the same as my childish game of "*kotse-kotsehan.*" He had been pedaling the trolley probably for a year or even longer. For him, it was not a fun game but a hard struggle for survival. It was not a leisure moment, it was a moment from school or a moment of playing basketball with his friends that he had to sacrifice to earn at least P5 from every passenger.

When he got out of sight, I continued moving forward. But I did not get very far. I lost my balance and tripped on some rocks jutting out of the tracks. While I was trying to regain my balance (as well as my poise and dignity), I heard laughter. I turned to a bunch of people sitting on a parked trolley in between the two tracks and they jeered, "*Wala kaming nakita!*" I probably turned beet red as I headed back to my companions who were laughing, too.

Afraid of making a fool of myself even more with my "circus-like" balancing act, I decided to quit it. I sat down with the group and tried to behave. But it was hard. Just a few minutes later, I was up on my feet again, balancing on another beam, walking in the opposite direction (and away from the group that laughed at me). Again, I stopped to make way for a woman carrying two heavy pails of water, which she had probably bought at P1 a bucket from "Patubig ni Othana." She too struggled to maintain her balance as she walked on the tracks, hoping not to spill too much of her precious water.

When she was a safe distance away, I resumed walking. I noticed that a number of people looked at us distrustfully. I overheard some of my companions say these railroad denizens got scared when they saw us arrive there with a camera and a tripod. They thought we were surveyors checking out the place for demolition.

Well, I couldn't blame them for being a bit jumpy. They knew they did not own their home lots, they lived in a high-risk area and they were bound to be evicted soon.

"Soon" became real in 2002 when they received news of the Arroyo administration's South Railway rehabilitation project, which will affect about 10,471 families living in the area. Already living on the balance beam of poverty, they knew the eviction case was another blow that could send them deeper in despair. But no matter how much heavier their buckets of problems became, they still chose to fight and keep their balance. They chose to live and not to give up hope. They chose not to fall on the tracks and in the way of an on-rushing train.

So they scavenged for bamboo sticks, welded steel bars together and built the trolley. They go all the way to Cavite every day to buy fish for resale to their neighbors. And to assure themselves of a piece of land of their own when they finally get evicted, they try to save a portion of their weekly earnings through the savings mobilization scheme of the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP), to which their association Kapatiran Sama-sama sa Miraculous Medal Inc. (Kasámi) belongs. Their savings will be used to purchase land in Silang, Cavite.

These people try to make good decisions in order to stay on the beam. But sometimes they also make bad judgments and trip. Still, that does not deter them from getting back on their feet and continuing the fight. They just laugh at problems and pretend like bad things never happen or "*wala silang nakita.*" Many claim that seeing humor in such sad realities lightens the crosses they carry.

When Subash finally wrapped up his interview with Mang Rolly, we heard a train coming. He hurriedly set up his camera to get a shot of the train. As it passed, my colleague said the train sounded like somebody wailing. I listened more closely, and he was right: it was such a plaintive cry. I thought that the train was probably crying for those who had lost their lives on the tracks and for those who had lost their fight to live. Some people paused and it seemed as if they were paying their respects to the friends and family members they lost.

When the train was out of sight, everyone resumed his chore. For them, life was still not over. They had to go on living.

Gambling on gambling

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LAST week, most daily newspapers featured on their front pages a report from Dr. Jay Jay Carcereny on betting among schoolchildren, including a revelation that there are Filipino minors now undergoing rehabilitation for pathological gambling.

I wasn't surprised to hear about child pathological gamblers. But what did astonish, and disappoint, me was the almost nonchalant (the Tagalog slang "*dedma*" is a bit stronger) response to the report.

Back in 2001, at the height of the campaign to oust Joseph Estrada as president, much was said about his support for gambling, including the invitation he extended to Stanley Ho, the Macau casino king, to operate in the Philippines. Print and broadcast media warned about the dangers of gambling and how it would adversely affect families, communities, the entire nation.

At that time, I also did columns against gambling, with one particular piece asking why, amid all the ranting about Erap and Ho, we weren't asking if, in our own homes, we may have transformed gambling into an acceptable norm. That particular column brought in many letters from readers, mostly agreeing with what I had written and some offering quite profound insights. On the other hand, I did hear from readers who also chided me for over-reacting, arguing that gambling in the home was acceptable since it was just harmless leisure.

I wonder, and worry, about that assumption.

An individual or social problem?

But let me finish first with the Erap connection to gambling. We know that after Erap was ousted, the issue of gambling as a social problem dropped out of the public's mind, except for occasional news about a crackdown on small *jueteng* and *masiao* operators. It almost seemed as if we went into national denial, hoping that the problem wasn't too serious, and that it would go away, together with all its associated social maladies: wrecked family budgets; squandered savings; neglected, even battered, spouses and children; alcohol and drug dependencies; severe depression.

I did a review and I was amazed at the amount of research being conducted around gambling. There's even a Journal of Gambling Behavior, the title of which tells us that many of the studies use frameworks from psychology. Reviewing one bibliography compiled by a Canadian, Erin Gibbs van Brunschot, I realized many of the studies looked for a gambling personality, suggesting that some people (generally described as impulsive and with weak self-control) were more prone to become problem gamblers.

The problem with this approach is that it reduces gambling to an individual phenomenon, gamblers becoming gamblers because they have a predisposition to it. That perspective has its value, especially if we are looking into rehabilitation, but if we want to prevent the serious problems around gambling, then we need a broader perspective, one that looks into how society itself may in fact encourage people to gamble.

National schizophrenia

Let's face it: we suffer from national schizophrenia when it comes to gambling. At the national level, our leaders' speeches rail against gambling, yet the government, driven by the need for revenues, sets up more casinos and suggests that maybe *jueteng* and *masiao* can be legalized.

Close to home, we piously declare gambling to be wrong, attending Mass on Sundays to listen to some sermon attacking *jueteng*, and then return to homes where there is, literally, a gambling activity for everyone, young or old, male or female, gay or straight.

The men go off for cockfighting, the women form their mahjong quartets and the adolescents go into marathon card game sessions. Only the baby and the pets are spared as households come alive with the clatter of mahjong tiles and victorious cries of "Pong!"

I just had to mention the baby because one has to remember that in two or three years, he or she will be conscious of the gambling at home, together with all the rationalizations around the "games." Because the gambling is so pervasive, it insidiously becomes part of our psyche.

Notice, for example, that not to participate in some of these activities puts one at risk of being labeled anti-social. Then, too, we rationalize that the gambling is just a game (*laro lang*), being "small-time" and involving *barya* or loose change, and of course we know that in some households, that can mean P500 and P1,000 bills.

The most dangerous rationalization is that the gambling is leisure activity, a way of passing time. I was struck, about two weeks ago, by a front-page photograph in the INQUIRER showing relatives of Angelo de la Cruz, the overseas worker taken hostage in Iraq, waiting for his return. The photograph and the caption were clear in explaining that the relatives were passing time through "toss-coin," again a gambling activity.

Small-time? Perhaps, like the bets over *tong-its* and other card games. But the research conducted abroad shows that there is a whole ethos, a set of cultural values, behind this gambling-as-leisure standard. When gambling is raised as the standard for leisurely social activity, it displaces other possibilities for the family, such as reading, or sports, or a family outing.

A relative of mine once tried to justify it: "Oh, but it's expensive to buy books, and sports equipment, or to go on an outing." Sure. Gambling, I presume, has no expenses...

And myopia

Are we so myopic that we are unable to see the costs of those innocent card games and other forms of gambling? The denial and the rationalization build up, and the myopia approaches total blindness. Have you reflected, for example, on the fact that Philippine Airlines can now fly you to Las Vegas? It's a lucrative route, I am told, entire families taking the flight supposedly because Las Vegas also offers great entertainment for the kids. What a terrible tragedy this is, the way our colonial mentality converges with our gambling ethos, making us all too willing to spend precious foreign exchange on a flight to Mother America where we can throw away more dollars in the casinos.

Should we be surprised that school administrators are now complaining about students "passing time" by betting, with cards, with basketball "endings" or even with the page numbers on their textbooks?

Let me share one last example to highlight the consequences of our gambling with gambling. I was with an urban poor family the other week for a clan reunion organized around a newborn child. Her proud grandmother told me in Tagalog: "Look, look at her eyes. Only two weeks and her eyes are already following people when they move. She's a bright one. A really bright one. I tell you, when she grows up, she'll beat everyone at *tong-its*."

You can guess what the baby's relatives were doing in the living room on what could have been a cheerful Sunday morning.

A woman's plea

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AT THE HEIGHT of the Church campaign against the reproductive health care bill, daily pickets were mounted in front of the residence of Cebu Rep. Nerissa Soon Ruiz, one of its more outspoken defenders. Considering that all the other Cebu representatives, whether because of their personal beliefs or bowing to the pressure of Church authorities in Cebu, opposed the bill or kept quiet about it, it would have been understandable if "Inday Neri" had chosen the better part of discretion. Who would have blamed her for backing off? She was facing a bruising campaign for her second term, and taking on Cebu's influential Ricardo Cardinal Vidal could only have meant risking electoral defeat.

But, not only did Inday Neri win her second consecutive term (after a one-term hiatus from Congress when she lost her bid for mayor of Mactan), she has also continued her staunch support for the bill and her firm advocacy of reproductive rights. The reason for this, it turns out, is not only because it makes for good policy, but also because she has embraced the issue as a personal and deeply felt conviction.

This she demonstrated quite eloquently in a privilege speech she delivered Monday, which was received by her colleagues in the House, eyewitness accounts say, not with their usual indifference but with interest and even compassion.

Inday Neri opened her speech with a very personal perspective: "Many of you may probably know this representation only as the lady doctor from Cebu, a second termer...Some close colleagues may have also known me as taking the last flight to marriage at the age of 34, bore her first child at the age of 36, her second two years later, and her third also two years after.

"I knew then, as I still know now, that every one of my pregnancies was high risk, but unlike many of our countrywomen, I was then under very good medical care."

* * *

INDAY Neri pointed out that not only did she get the best possible care to protect her and her children from the adverse effects of high-risk pregnancies, she was also able to talk with her husband about the need to space her pregnancies as well as to make sure "my last pregnancy should be before I turned 40."

Her purpose for sharing such intimate details of her life was not to bore her colleagues with tidbits about her life, she declared, but rather "to underscore the importance of planning one's family, both in terms of size and spacing."

Currently the talk of the town, Inday Neri pointed out, was a bill "filed by our very brave friend from Albay," Rep. Edcel Lagman, which has been labeled by the media as the "two-child policy" bill. "Listening to the discordant voices for and against the bill, my mother's heart grieves for other women who did not have the same choices as I had," she confided.

"I speak about the women who lost their lives while they were pregnant or giving birth or who have suffered from infection and other post-pregnancy complications, because they had no access to good medical care before, during and after pregnancy. I grieve for the mothers pleading for the lives of their infants and other children as they become sick because they do not have the means to provide good food and health care.

"I cry for the women who have become victims of violence because they have said 'no' to sex with their partners for fear of becoming pregnant."

* * *

IN HER speech, Inday Neri bemoaned how public discussion of family planning and reproductive health has too often been seen in black-and-white terms, of being "a scourge from the devil (its supporters) spawn of Satan," or simply a matter of distinguishing between "natural" and "artificial" means. "Why cannot we listen to those who will actually rear their children?" she asked.

"I stand here as a medical doctor, a mother and as a woman," she declared. "I stand here as a legislator who cares for the welfare of the women, men and young people in my district. I shall be as proud as a peacock, so to speak, if their quality of life will improve because they are healthier, more educated and (have) more opportunities."

The congresswoman also expressed the hope that even as President Macapagal-Arroyo has said that "informed choice" is the keystone of her family planning policy, "she would also find space in her heart to instruct our Department of Health, all other concerned officials in all levels including our local chief executives, and my fellow legislators, to put in place policies, programs and budgets which would provide access to information for all on family planning and services to those who seek it."

* * *

AS it's said in the women's movement, the personal is political. It took a woman of Inday Neri's life experience and capacity to commiserate to link her own personal history of late marriage and high-risk pregnancies with the urgent concerns of other women and children who were not as fortunate as her, her husband and children, and who did not share their advantages.

It's this same personal history that has informed the congresswoman's legislative work, and it is this story that fortifies her against all the attacks on her person and even her morals simply for supporting the right of Filipino women to the best standards of care.

Would that all women officials, elected or appointed, feel the same connect between their personal issues and the issues that confront society as a whole. Laws cannot and should not be made in a vacuum, especially not in a vacuum inured from the stirrings of the human heart and of human experience.

Beasts and men

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

READING the "Book of Beasts," a translation by T.H. White of a 12th-century bestiary from the original Latin manuscript, I realized how much of the English words we use today have Greek or Latin roots. I also saw how people so many centuries ago gave human attributes to animals. The entry on crocodiles read:

"Cocodryllus got its name from crocus or its saffron color...Its dung provides an ointment with which old and wrinkled whores anoint their figures and are made beautiful, until the flowing sweat of their efforts washes it away...Hypocritical, dissolute and avaricious people have the same nature as this brute—also any people who are puffed up with the vice of pride, dirtied with the corruption of luxury, or haunted with the disease of avarice...pretending in the sight of men to be upright and indeed very saintly."

These days some politicians are still compared to crocodiles, but the ointment mentioned twice is really a thing of the past.

Monkeys being "similar" to humans received special attention:

"They are called MONKEYS (*Simia*) in the Latin language because people notice a great similitude to human reason in them. Wise in the lore of the elements, these creatures grow merry at the time of the new moon. At the half and full moon they are depressed...*Simia* is a Greek word meaning 'with squashed nostrils' hence we call monkeys this, because they have turned-up noses and a hideous countenance, with wrinkles lewdly puffing like bellows..."

As I mentioned in my last column, although there was a lot of material on mythical beasts like unicorns, satyrs and mermaids, I was more interested in real animals because they were seen differently eight centuries ago. There was even a belief that everything on earth had a counterpart under the sea and perhaps even in the heavens. If there were men on earth, then there were mermen in the sea; and like maidens on earth, there were mermaids like Marina in the water.

The beasts were also used to deliver moral or catechetical lessons. Imagine the mythical unicorn being explained parallel to Christ or certain animals acting like humans. For example the entry on the beaver reads:

"This is an animal called CASTOR the Beaver [because of the castration]. None more gentle, and his testicles make a capital medicine. For this reason, so Physiologus says, when he notices that he is being pursued by the hunter, he removes his own testicles with a bite, and casts them before the sportsman, and thus escapes by flight. What is more, if he should again happen to be chased by a second hunter, he lifts himself up and shows his members to him. And the latter, when he perceives the testicles to be missing, leaves the beaver alone."

If so much erudition can be spent on animals and mythical beasts, one can imagine what a book on man would be like. It's a pity that White did not translate the whole section on Man, the book after all being a bestiary, leaving us to speculate on what he described as "a remorseless catalogue of about 170 parts of the human body, with their function and the derivation of their names." The little he actually left for the reader's enjoyment, (and in very small print) left me with an appetite for more:

"The important finger is the thumb, which among other things is strong in virtue and power. The second is the forefinger, which is not only serviceable but is used for giving directions, because we generally salute or show or point out with it. The third is the middle finger, by means of which the pursuit of dishonour is indicated. The fourth finger is the ring finger, because the ring is worn on it. The finger is also medicinal, because the common eye-salves are applied with it by doctors. The fifth finger is called the auris because we scratch the ear with it."

What caught my attention was a line that read, "We laugh with the spleen, we are enraged with the gall-bladder, we have discernment with the heart and we love with the lover... [M]uscles derive their name from mice because they move about under the skin as mice move under the earth ... [T]he seat of wantonness in women is the navel."

This reminded me of "The Body Book" edited by Fe Maria C. Arriola (my once and future mother-in-law) illustrated by the late Onib Olmedo that provided what was supposed to be a geography of the Filipino body through language, folklore, anthropology and culture. In 12th-century Europe, the fingers are described above; in the late 20th-century Philippines, the same fingers are described as government departments:

"Little finger (*kalingkingan*) is the Department of Hygiene because it is often used to clean the ear. Ring Finger (*Palasinsingan* or *dumalaga*) is the Department of Civil Relations because it is where the wedding ring is worn. Middle finger (*Hinlalato* or *dato*) is the Department of National Defense such as in the dirty finger sign... Pointer finger (*Hintuturo*) is the Department of Education. Obviously, the teacher is always wagging it. Thumb (*Hinlalaki*) is the Department of Justice because a thumbprint is the acceptable mode of identification."

The same parts of the body in a different time and culture reads differently as contemporary animals in a medieval bestiary. History is also similar: the same stories, the same data read differently over time, producing different versions, depending on who is narrating the story.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

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PLRA answers Cruz's allegations

PLEASE allow us to clarify some points that Neal Cruz raised in his July 16 column on the Philippine Leisure and Retirement Authority (PLRA).

1. Ramon Collado's involvement with the Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA, now the PLRA) through the Philippine Retirement Authority Members Association Foundation (Prama)) was only from 1993 to 2000.

2. Our new chair, Davidica E. Salaya, has nothing to do with the alleged efforts to have Collado deported from the Philippines. Also, Collado filed the cases against the PLRA long after Salaya resigned as chief executive officer and general manager of the PRA and long before she assumed office as PLRA chair in February 2004.

3. It is true that the PLRA was in the red by P45 million in 1992, but this was mainly because it was then a fledgling, pioneering agency, just starting to develop our country as a retirement haven. The gestation period of the PRA took some time because we first needed to conduct promotional efforts abroad on very limited resources.

4. The PLRA was created on July 4, 1985 to develop and promote the Philippines as a retirement haven, thus helping increase the inflow of foreign exchange to the country. It was capitalized at P200 million but received only P10 million as initial equity. Notwithstanding the minuscule initial capital, the PLRA is now an income-generating government agency. This year alone, the PLRA contributed P17,169,491 in income taxes and more than P25 million in dividend earnings to the national coffers.

5. It was only in 1996 that the enrollment to our retirement program reached levels that put the PLRA in the black. Since then, the annual growth rate of the PLRA's retained earnings has averaged 47 percent. The PLRA today has a clientele of 10,400 retirees/enrollees.

6. It would be accurate to point out that the gains the PLRA is now enjoying are due in large part to the leadership and marketing efforts of the PRA during Salaya's tenure as chief executive officer and general manager.

7. Salaya did leave the PRA in 1993, not because she was removed from office but for health reasons. Nevertheless, Salaya continued to help the PLRA in whatever way she could, especially in developing the Japanese market. Despite her delicate health, she returned as chair early this year to help the PLRA in charting its policy directions. Please note that as chair, she has no hand in its day-to-day operations.

8. On the points that Cruz raised on the cases involving Collado, we are not at liberty to comment on them as they are pending in court.

9. We wish to inform Cruz that the PLRA has resident officers from the Commission on Audit who are charged with auditing PLRA funds and disbursements, all of which are subject to government audit.

—ELIZABETH HERMOSISIMA-PALMA, corporate secretary and legal counsel, Philippine Leisure and Retirement Authority, 29/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

Columns are not for rumors or slurs

I WOULD like to express my displeasure over the remarks made by INQUIRER columnist Belinda Olivares-Cunanan against Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago in her July 29 column titled "Let's do it."

In her column, Cunanan stated that Santiago "has always acted on the basis of what pleases her monstrous ego." I am, however, left wondering what the basis is for this obviously derogatory remark since Cunanan failed to identify the specific "action" the senator was supposed to have taken, purportedly "to please her monstrous ego." Cunanan simply went on to say that Senate President Franklin Drilon should "stop waiting for his feisty *kasimanwa* to stabilize," a clearly malicious statement intended to sully Santiago's reputation while painting a picture of the Senate president as some sort of a patient and suffering martyr.

Santiago, a popular advocate of reforms and a certified graft and corruption buster, has always been known for being a feisty and independent-minded individual, proof of which is the recent dare she made to her colleagues for them to reveal their true incomes as senators.

Obviously, Santiago has a penchant for saying things that may not be agreeable to certain people. While the views she espouses may be unpopular, they are not necessarily wrong or unreasonable.

While I concede that opinion writers are entitled to express their views regarding various issues, this freedom is not unbridled. A line must be drawn between constructive opinion-making and plain attacks on the personality of respected public officials. Opinion columns are not supposed to spread rumors and slur reputations. They are supposed to help readers understand issues affecting the country and their lives. Cunanan should have realized this and not simply resort to cheap name-calling.

The INQUIRER is one of the most widely read newspapers in the country, if not the most. It is, therefore, very powerful in shaping public opinion. I hope that the INQUIRER journalists and opinion writers recognize this great responsibility as well and try to uphold the true ideals of fair journalism.

—C.I. BLARDONY, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City

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LETTERS TO THE INQUIRER

A family that texts stays close

I AM the daughter of an overseas Filipino worker in Abu Dhabi. My mother and my four siblings—a brother and three sisters—frequently communicate with our father through text messaging.

We find that communication through text messaging is convenient and cheap. Just talking with our father through "texting" gives us comfort and peace of mind, because we know he is safe and healthy. Texting also allows us to keep our father posted on what's happening in the family, such as when somebody gets ill or when we get good grades which make him happy.

Thus, the news that the government is thinking of putting an additional tax on texting bothers us. How can we now keep on communicating with our father in Abu Dhabi regularly if texting becomes expensive? He works in the desert and is often lonely. Communicating with us gives him consolation and happiness. We certainly cannot afford the voice calls for which higher fees are charged per minute.

It is said, "A family that prays together stays together." I say, "A family that communicates regularly stays close together." So, cheap communications could keep family members united, even though they are physically separated by bodies of water and desert lands.

I appeal to the President not to go through with her plan to impose tax on texting, if only to help keep OFW families together.

—MAE LOS BAÑOS, 2119 Old Balagtas St., Pandacan, Manila

Exclusion of military dependents from 'Army Gym' questioned

I WRITE to speak for and on behalf of the dependents of Philippine Army soldiers in Fort Bonifacio.

The Philippine Army Wellness and Recreation Center (PAWC) in Fort Bonifacio, better known as the "Army Gym," was created for the use of military personnel and their dependents. On July 26, 2004, however, a rule banning military dependents from using the gym and its facilities was issued. The rule instead gives preference to "PAWC cardholders." These are public and private individuals (non-military personnel), who have acquired a PAWC membership by paying the prescribed dues and fees. Any civilian may apply for a PAWC membership (but not military dependents) and as long as they make the required payments, they can use any of the PAWC facilities.

Needless to say, the rule discriminates against military dependents, for whom the Army Gym was established in the first place.

Aside from providing a place for exercise, the PAWC is a place where military personnel and dependents get the opportunity to spend quality time with their friends and families; and where children of army soldiers engage in sports activities.

In the spirit of fairness, we call on our leaders to please look into the matter.

A government facility, like the PAWC, should not be used for commercial purposes, much less for enriching public officials, at the expense of poor military dependents.

Lastly, let me ask this question: Where do the revenues generated by the PAWC go?

—ANNE G. GARCIA, anne_g_garcia@yahoo.com

Unnatural, indecent ads

THIS LATEST advertisement promoting an underwear product (PDI, 7/16/04) caught me by surprise. I have admired the previous ads of its manufacturer as they were more youthful, decent and presented in good taste. But this particular ad does not only show models in their underwear. It has a "thought box" of guys in a library wearing only their undergarments with the caption "in your mind." What is it trying to say? That we look around imagining people in underwear?

Advertisements influence our culture and way of thinking. Advertisers, ad agencies and our government officials should feel responsible in promoting basic decency and creating the proper cultural environment in our country.

I don't think it is necessary to show how an underwear should be worn. It is not natural to show people in underwear in billboards; in much the same way as it is not natural to see people walking around or posing in public in beautiful underwear.

I remember an ad I saw in Italy in the year 2000. All there was in the ad were a bra and a panty—no models. Michael Jordan was on a billboard holding up a brief he was endorsing without himself posing in jocks.

Creative people in some companies just could not seem to get out of the box showing skin and bodies.

—OLIVER M. TUAZON, College of Science, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City

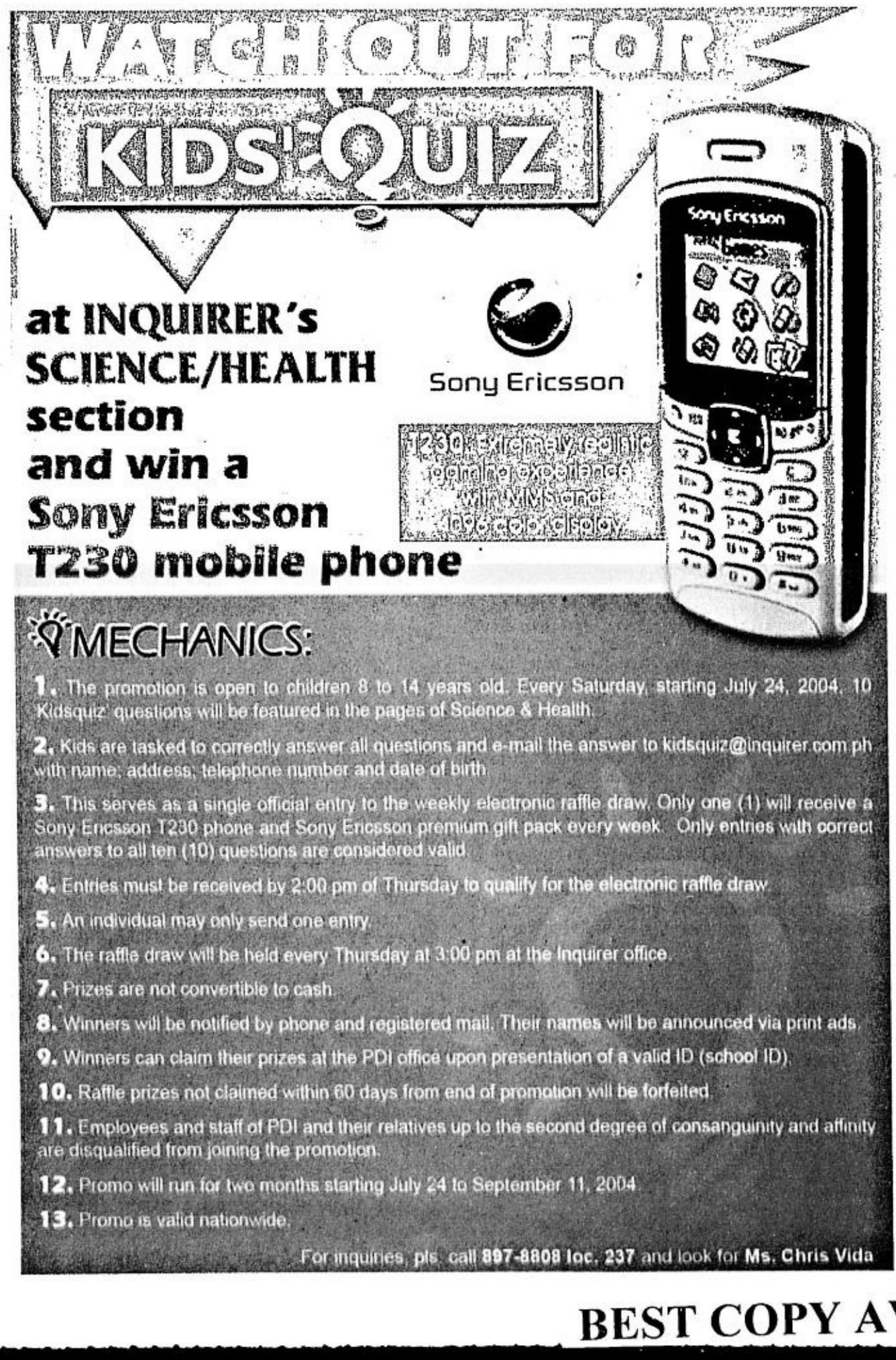
Pursue land reform as earnestly as tax measures

DURING HER State of the Nation Address, President Macapagal-Arroyo assured that land reform would be one of her priorities. It was good to hear that, especially because land reform is not in her 10-point agenda.

But it would be more heartening if the President pursued land reform as earnestly as she is pushing the tax measures. She could start in the province of the newly elected representative of Negros Occidental, Ignacio Arroyo, her brother-in-law. According to the Department of Agrarian Reform, there are more than 146,000 hectares of agricultural lands that have yet to be distributed in that province, making it the top province in terms of land distribution backlog.

I really hope the President would seriously push for land distribution in Negros Occidental. This is very critical in uplifting the lives of sugar workers and farmers. Bogus land reform schemes—like the "corporative" system—should be rejected. They do not improve the people's living condition. They also do not make for democratic participation: the beneficiaries do not really get to participate in running the farm and they are not told about the real profit and how much ought to go to the workers.

—RAFFY REY HIPOLITO, policy advocacy officer, Fian-Philippines, 2149-B Fidel Reyes St., Malate, Manila



On population control

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

THE DEBATE between the Catholic Church and population control advocates benefits both camps extremely. Already, media and the public are being duped into reducing the debate to one of draconian state measures (population control) and withholding family planning options (exclusively natural family planning as far as the conservative Church is concerned). Sadly, the draft Reproductive Healthcare Act that was filed by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon (now Senate Bill 1280) has been overlooked. This is more or less the same bill, which made it through committee deliberations in the 12th Congress and was the object of attack by the conservative Catholic hierarchy, including the President who aligned herself with the bishops.

The same bill lays down a holistic view of reproductive health care and establishes much needed services, doing so under a framework of the human right to a quality life. This means families, couples, women and men will make the choices for themselves, equipped with an array of quality information as well as safe and effective options for family planning. The bill also addresses the very serious problem of unsafe abortion by giving women access to family planning information, services and humane treatment in cases of post-abortion complications.

If we were to look closely at the apparently "warring" parties—the conservative religious groups and the self-proclaimed guardians of secularism (who want to resort to extreme measures to control the population)—it is easy to spot their common trait. Both sides don't care about the respect and dignity of women's decision-making. The population control advocates would have the state penalize women for getting pregnant by depriving them medical care, and the Catholic conservatives would have women consigned to multiple pregnancies not of their own free and informed choice! Either way, they want to restrict women's options and not one of them is for the promotion and provision of a quality reproductive health care system.—**Carolina S. Ruiz, Austria, executive director, Womenlead Foundation Inc., 45 Mapagkumbaba St., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City, via e-mail**

* * *

I was once a staunch supporter of artificial birth control. It's by far the most practical way of population control. It just seemed right. It seemed like a very practical and "intelligent" solution to the overpopulation problem. That is, until I took the chance of at least looking at what the Catholic Church has to say about it. Even without the Bible, the Church has a very strong case against artificial contraception. Adding the Bible to its arsenal in the fight against artificial contraception, its case becomes almost indestructible. Take into account the history of Christianity, and the Church's case becomes very viable.

On the other hand, artificial contraception promotes the abortive mentality, which in turn promotes a desanctification of sex—an idea that creates a sexual culture devoid of love, and full of lust.

Today, I strongly support Natural Family Planning (NFP) as a much better alternative to artificial contraceptive methods. For those who like referring to the Bible, you will find that NFP is what Christianity recommends. For those who are wary about any references to "Christianity," logic and natural law, and even science itself support Natural Family Planning. We just need to start with some effective sex education program that focuses more on the meaning of sex, and not just on the "fear" of having unwanted pregnancies, or STDs. Many who engage in such activities know how to avoid these things. Perhaps, we need to see sex in a different way...as nature's gift to us, a gift we must value highly. For Christians who claim to know biblical truth, and are pro-lifers, please fight to promote NFP. For those who believe in a God, but have no religious affiliation, please understand that sex is the language of love, and marriage is its medium. Putting an artificial barrier (artificial contraceptive) distorts the flow of that communication.—**Ian Vincent, New York, NY, USA, via e-mail**

* * *

Rapid population growth is only one of the issues that our people and government must face. There are other issues, such as the destruction of our environment, which includes climate change and global warming, loss of forest cover, water resources, degradation of soil resources, and in general, destruction of the world's carrying capacity. To single out the population issue is to guarantee the failure of our efforts. Government and population management advocates must now strive for development that is really sustainable and they must join with other advocates of genuine sustainable development.—**Vicente G. Lava Jr., 112 V. Rufino St., Legaspi Village, Makati City, via e-mail**

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Old HK woman guilty of abusing RP maid

HONG KONG—A 69-year-old Hong Kong woman was convicted of wounding her Filipino maid by pouring hot water on her chest and striking her head with a bowl, a newspaper reported Thursday.

Magistrate Peter Law found Ho Chuen-hoo guilty and fined her 10,000 Hong Kong dollars (US$1,280) on Wednesday, the Sing Pao Daily News reported.

Ho reportedly attacked maid Llena Charito Alemania because she allegedly didn't fully boil water that the woman drank. Many Hong Kongers boil tap water because they believe it makes it safer.

Ho's lawyer successfully argued against jail time, saying imprisonment would be a "big shock" for an elderly woman with heart and bone problems, Sing Pao reported.

Judiciary spokesperson Jaime Or said she had no information on the case. The maid's hometown and age weren't available.

About 123,000 Filipinos work in wealthy Hong Kong as domestic helpers. *AP*

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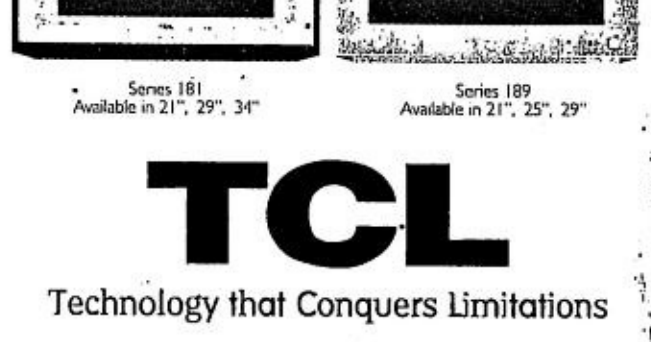

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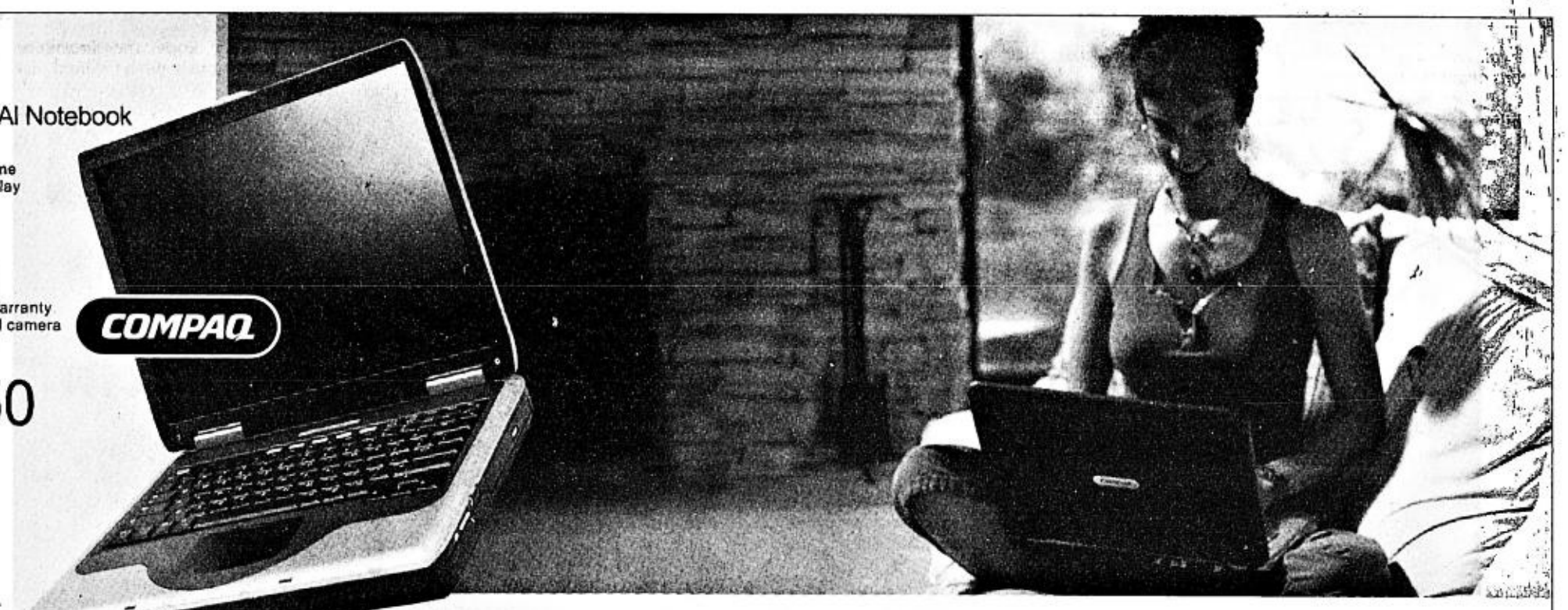

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Smuggled onions flooding RP, growers say

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CABANATUAN CITY—Onion growers and traders are urging officials of the Department of Agriculture and other government agencies to redouble efforts to stop the smuggling of onions as they said it is killing the industry.

"Smuggled onions are still coming in and causing much harm to our onion growing industry," said Magtanggol Alvarez and Erlinda Abad, founder and incumbent president of the Union of Growers and Traders of Onion in the Philippines (Ugat). Alvarez and Abad, who are based in Bongabon town, the biggest onion growing town in the country, are leading a renewed move to finally put a stop to what they said was the unchecked smuggling of onions.

Along with other onion growers in Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan and Nueva Vizcaya, they went to Manila on Tuesday to appeal to DA officials, particularly those in the Bureau of Plant Industry, to stop the smuggling.

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At harvest time, buyers buy onions at lower than P5 a kilo. Sources at the provincial agricultural office in Nueva Ecija said the break-even price for farmers in onion growing is P5.70 a kilo.

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With the flooding of smuggled onions in the market, sources said, onions are priced during the rainy season at P17 to P25 a kilo or even less.

At that market price, traders who are buying onions from local farmers cannot compete. Last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced in Palayan City that the illegal importation of onions had been checked.

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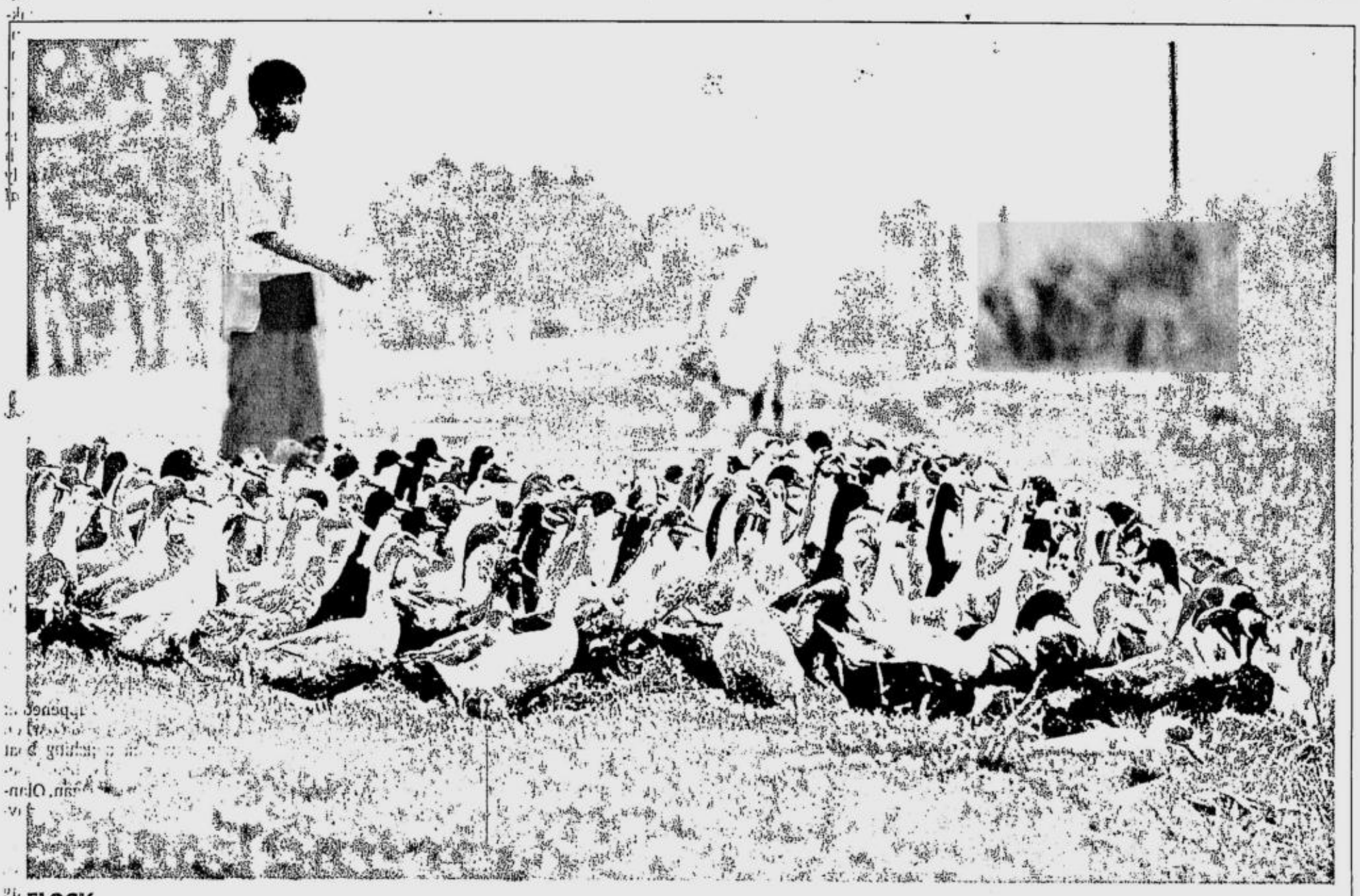

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AFP

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The officials were appointees of former Governors Faustino Dy Jr. and Benjamin Dy.

Reached for comment, Padaca, a polio-stricken former broadcaster who defeated Dy Jr., the eldest son of the late political patriarch Faustino Dy Sr., said it was a "management decision" to dismiss the eight department heads.

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GOVERNOR Padaca needed more than prayers to defeat a clan that ruled Isabela for years. PDI PHOTO

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LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The country has been jolted by 15,000 earthquakes since the powerful 6.8 intensity quake that struck Luzon on July 16, 1990, according to the Philippine Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Thus government officials and rescue volunteers should be prepared when earthquakes strike because Benguet is host to several active fault lines, said Oscar Pais, officer in charge of the Philippine National Red Cross.

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He said the country experienced strong tremors during the last 14 years but these were minor compared to the killer quake that struck a wide area of Luzon on July 16, 1990. Thousands of people were killed as a result of the quake.

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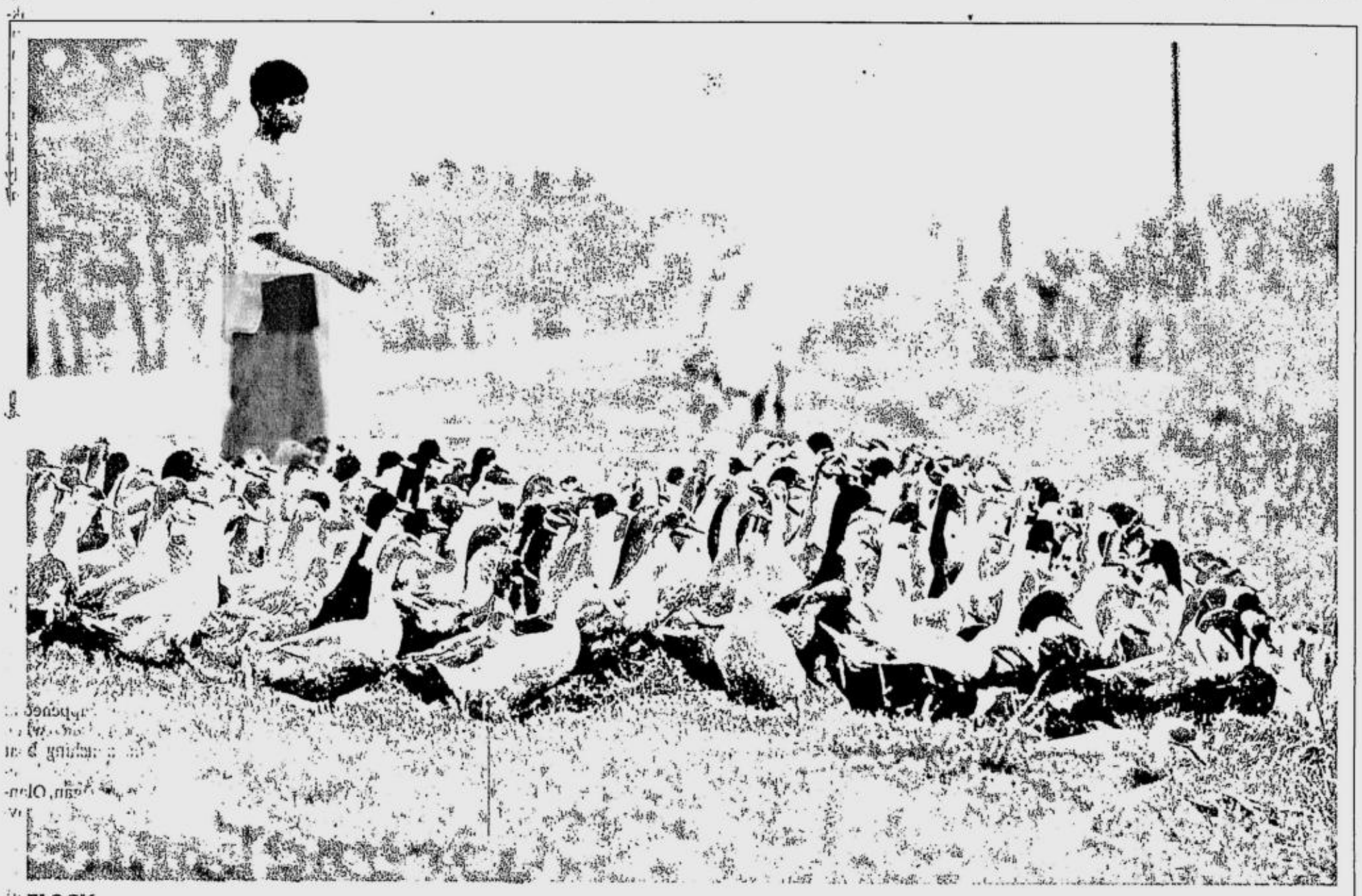

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SIMPLE TOYS TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Homeless youngsters stroll along a barangay road in Baguio City with just bare essentials, including a tattered rag doll which still manages to bring glee to its new found owner.

Focus on LGUs' family planning programs sought

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—As debates over the proposed two-child policy and five-year moratorium on birth raged, family planning advocates in Central Luzon urged lawmakers not to overlook two local but important concerns.

The first is the supply of contraceptives that are not coming starting next year from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The second is preparing local governments to plan and finance their own family planning programs.

Rosa Fortaleza, Population Commission regional director, said lawmakers should consider these matters in the ongoing population debate.

Fortaleza said this was the sentiment of the Solidarity of Advocates and Family Enlightened for Family Planning (Safe-FP), which held a forum here on Wednesday.

Central Luzon, for instance, is the third fastest growing region in terms of population after Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog, she said.

The 2000 census showed that Central Luzon, including Aurora province, has 8.2 million residents.

According to Fortaleza, the region's annual growth rate of 3.6 percent surpassed the 2.3 percent rate at the national level.

She said Bataan, Bulacan and Pampanga would have to confront the supply question now, and not next year when support from the USAID stops.

The population in those provinces is either the largest or the fastest growing in the region, she said.

Yet, Fortaleza said contraceptive use is 55 percent, the rate of unmet needs for birth control methods is 17 percent and the fertility rate of women is equivalent to four children.

"Hardly are there local governments that have items for budget to buy contraceptives," Fortaleza said.

By now, she said local governments would have to start making ordinances for their own family planning programs, the mechanisms and the budget for these.

"What will happen to users of pills, injectables and condoms if we can't sustain them?" she asked. The Department of Health provides the local supply now. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Troops enjoying stay in Zambo City

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Maguindanao-based soldiers who are here for a six-week Light Infantry Battalion training are enjoying their stay in the city.

The training is part of the joint exercises conducted by American and Filipino soldiers here.

Lt. Reynaldo Sambo, the commander of the 64th Infantry Battalion's Alpha company, said his soldiers' stay has become more of a "breather."

"It's more on practical approaches, it serves as review or refresher to our soldiers because we already took this type of training during the Basic Army Course," Sambo said.

"It is lighter compared to the actual situation we experienced in Matanog (town in Maguindanao)," Pfc. Genesis Dearos said while relaxing under a mahogany tree.

The difference, Dearos noted, was that they have enough supply of ammunition during live fire exercises.

He also noted the desert-style operation of the American trainers when it comes to open-field maneuver training.

Dearos said he also looks forward to their weekend breaks "because we get to see Zamboanga City."

"We thought the city was all trees and jungle but it's not. In Matanog, we only get to see monkeys and birds during our break," he said.

Sgt. Ramon Mariano, one of the 160 Filipino trainees, said the American soldiers were particular on movements, "but what we are looking forward is the night movement, we already have this in our basic (training) and we are going beyond basic if we are on actual combat operation in Central Mindanao."

American trainer Capt. Garret DeWitt said prior to the exercise on movement techniques "we have already taken all their inputs, they already know how to patrol, they have shown us their techniques."

"We are actually learning from them as they learn from us, and we talked to them in details about the situation on how they patrol in the different situations they encounter in their area of operation," DeWitt said. ***Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

AN AMERICAN soldier looks on as a Filipino trooper conducts mock searches during training on antiterror tactics for Filipino troops. REUTERS

2 Dutch, 6 Filipinos survive sea accidents

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Eight people, including two tourists from Holland, survived two separate sea accidents on Tuesday and Wednesday in the waters off Olango Island, Cebu.

The first accident happened at about 5 p.m. on Tuesday when strong waves hit a fishing boat with five persons on board between Barangay Cauhagan, Olango and Cabul-an Island, Buenavista town in Bohol.

Less than 24 hours later, another small boat capsized also due to strong waves, throwing off two Dutch and a Filipino into the waters off between Sta. Rosa, Olango and Hilutungan Island, Cebu.

Supt. Louie Oppus, police chief of Lapulapu City, Mactan Island, said the five fishermen were on board F/B Inday Yolly at about 5 p.m. on Tuesday when strong waves hit them.

He said two of the five were able to swim back to shore. The three others were in the waters for at least 14 hours before they were rescued by other fishermen at about 10 a.m. on Wednesday.

Oppus identified the five as Artemio Tradio, Christopher Inoc, Rogelio Inoc, Manuel Tradio, all from Barangay Sabang, Olango; and Jessie Colico of Buenavista.

The police chief said he immediately alerted the Coast Guard and the Navy after Nelson Colico, owner of the fishing boat, reported the incident to them past 10 a.m. on Wednesday.

When the rescue team arrived in the area, the fishermen had already been pulled out of the water by other fishermen and brought to the Sta. Rosa Community Hospital in Olango for check up.

At about 3 p.m. on Wednesday, two foreigners, who were guests of a resort-hotel, along with their Filipino crew, were on board a small yacht to go sightseeing.

But strong waves hit the boat, causing it to capsize between the waters off Hilutungan and Sta. Rosa.

About two hours later, another boat passed by the area and informed a group of soldiers who were putting a small hut in a shoal off Sta. Rosa waters, about 3 km from the shore.

M/Sgt. Nelson Tabanyag of the Armed Forces Central Command's 3rd civil relations group and his four companions immediately got into their boat.

Tabanyag said that when they arrived at the area, they found the three, sitting on the hull of the overturned yacht and looking very tired and frightened.

Tabanyag identified the foreigners as Hans Korenblih and his female companion identified only as Jip, both in their 20s. He forgot to ask the name of the Filipino crew who operated the small yacht.

Church to look into martyrdom of 2 priests in 1940s

By Estanislao Caldez
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Catholic Church officials here have started looking into the martyrdom of two priests who were killed for standing up to their faith in the 1940s.

Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan has instructed church officials to start researching on the lives of Fr. Narciso Guevarra of Gattaran town and Fr. Catalino Bangayan of Camalaniugan town for their possible beatification.

Talamayan issued the directive in November last year following a trip with 90 other Filipino bishops to Rome.

But the process has been slowed down by the lack of sources to attest to the sacrifices of the two priests.

Talamayan said Guevarra died a martyr while promoting Catholic education in the province.

"The enemies of the church killed him while he was campaigning for the establishment of a Catholic school in Gattaran," said Talamayan.

Reports were vague on how Guevarra was killed sometime between 1946 and 1948.

The INQUIRER sought the help of the municipal trial court of Gattaran for information about any case that was filed in connection with Guevarra's killing.

Arsenia Verbo, Gattaran clerk of court, said they have not found any available court record on Guevarra's case.

She said some of the court's records "were eaten by termites and were destroyed by typhoons."

Rev. David William Antonio, rector of the Immaculate Conception School of Theology in Vigan City, said Guevarra was born in Nueva Ecija.

Guevarra entered the seminary in Binmaley, Pangasinan, in 1934, and in Vigan in 1940. He was ordained on March 25, 1944, and later assigned to Gattaran.

He was known in Gattaran for his humility and active involvement in promoting Catholic education. One of his plans was to put up a Catholic school in the town but he was killed before he could complete the project.

Bangayan, on the other hand, was the parish priest of Camalaniugan town during the last year of the Japanese occupation in 1944.

He was also known for his humility and his love for fishing. His chapel and rectory were built on the bank of the Cagayan River in Camalaniugan.

3 more persons, including trader, killed by vigilantes

DAVAO CITY—Three more persons, including a businessman, were gunned down by suspected members of the vigilante group Davao Death Squad (DDS).

The latest killings happened even as a city councilor threatened to recommend a cut in the assistance fund to the police for their failure to stop the summary executions.

First to fall was Rolando Custodio alias Dodong, 31, of Esquatan, Toril district.

Custodio, owner of several flower shops in the city, was standing near a car wash shop at around 12:45 p.m. Wednesday when four men on board two motorcycles arrived and shot him.

At first, the suspects missed Custodio, who ran and sought cover. He was however trapped inside an eatery where the gunmen chased him and shot him again.

The victim's name appeared twice—Rolando Custodio and Dodong Custodio—on the list of 500 personalities allegedly involved in the illegal drugs trade.

The list was read by Mayor Rodrigo Duterte in his television program two years ago.

At around 8:35 p.m. Wednesday, Zaldy Adeque was shot and killed while he was standing outside an eatery near the Assumption College of Davao along Cabaguio Avenue in Agdao district.

Adeque allegedly tried to run toward Villamor Street but the gunman chased him.

Yesterday morning, gunmen killed Eduardo Timtim, 34, of Sta. Cruz, Agdao district. The victim was on board his motorcycle on his way to work when he was shot by three men who were also riding a motorcycle.

Meanwhile, city tourism officer Edmundo Acaylar said the summary executions do not have an effect on the tourism industry.

He instead blamed media for blowing the issue out of proportion. He said the city has become safe for tourists and investors as "criminals are killed."

But on Tuesday, Councilor Bonifacio Militar said he will give the Davao City Police Office two months to show how they perform in solving the summary executions or he will recommend that they be stripped of the benefits they regularly receive from the city government.

"If they cannot apprehend suspects, we will recommend that the benefits that they are receiving from the city government be taken off. We will give them this last chance," he said.

Since the start of the year, at least 55 people have been killed by suspected DDS hit men. Most of the victims had criminal records.

But while blaming the police for the continued killings, Militar said he was not saying lawmen were involved in the killings.

"We are not suspecting that they are the ones responsible. But those getting killed who have records of robbery, rape or drug pushing—are they not entitled to the protection of the law? There are killings and what we want to know is that whether they have ever done anything to identify any of the perpetrators," he said.

Chief Supt. Isidro Lapena, police chief for Southern Mindanao, said the performance of the police does not lie only in solving the series of killings because it is just one aspect of peace and order.

Lapena said it takes years to solve a crime especially if there are no witnesses. ***Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Silay folk bow in prayer of thanksgiving

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—They stormed the heavens and their prayers were answered.

Screams of "Thank you, Lord" yesterday rang out at the Aguirre home in Silay City, Negros Occidental, after relatives and neighbors received word that conjoined twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre had been successfully separated in a delicate surgical operation in New York. *(Story on age A1.)*

The wonderful news was relayed by the twins' mother Arlene Aguirre who called up her father and siblings at their home at Hacienda Paz-Maatagoy in Barangay Rizal, Silay, about 14.4 km north of here.

Arlene made the call shortly after 10:32 a.m. yesterday when doctors told her that the twins had been separated after 12 hours of surgery.

Arlene, 31, a single mother and a nurse, cried and hugged her mother Evelindia, 52, who arrived in the United States on Saturday through the help of the PAL Foundation.

She then called her family in Hacienda Paz-Maatagoy through their mobile phone. It was her sister, Azela Aguirre Maulnes, 29, who received the call.

At first, Azela said she got scared because Arlene was sobbing. "I was afraid something bad happened," she said.

"I heard my sister crying and all she was saying was Day, Day (short for Inday) until she blurted out that the twins had been separated," Azela told the INQUIRER.

Arlene's voice sounded sad over the phone, Azela said. But her sister explained that it was because she and their mother, who was also crying, had not slept since the operation began and were exhausted.

Azela said she wept and handed the phone to their father, Fernando, 55, who was also crying. Their brother Andy, 26, just stood, as if he was frozen.

"After the news had sunk in, we jumped with joy and shouted 'Thank you, Lord, thank you Lord, thank you Lord,'" said Azela.

Non-stop prayers

The Aguirres and their neighbors had been praying for the twins' successful operation.

Father Felix Pasquin of the San Diego Pro-Cathedral in Silay City had been holding daily Masses for the twins since Tuesday upon the request of Silay Mayor Carlo Gamban.

The Carmelite and St. Scholastica sisters as well as the Marian missionaries in Bacolod City were also praying for the twins.

The Aguirre family has kept a lighted candle near the pictures of Carl and Clarence on their altar since they left for New York in September last year.

The candle symbolized the family's hope that one day the twins would be able to live separate lives.

At about 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 20 relatives and neighbors gathered at the hacienda chapel to pray the rosary and hold a vigil for the twins. They left at about 1 a.m. yesterday.

Out of danger

Six hours later, Arlene called to inform the family that the major vein that connected the twins had been cut and it looked like the twins were out of danger. Then at about 10:35 a.m., the phone rang again — this time Arlene told them the wonderful news.

Television crews arrived to await word with the Aguirre family about the twins' operation. The Aguirres cooked chicken *tinola* and bangus for their media guests.

But if there was one person who was as excited as the Aguirres about the outcome of the operation, it was Dr. Ceres Gay, a member of the Philippine Pediatric Society in Negros Occidental who brought up the need to have the twins surgically separated to PAL Foundation executive director Ma Carmen Sarmiento.

At that time, the twins were nearly a year old and were severely malnourished. They were also suffering from chronic aspiration pneumonia.

'You're now the mother of two boys'

From page A1

been able to sit up, stand straight or look at each other's face, was for them to lead "viable, independent lives."

Pushed apart, cut, divided

During four major surgeries since last October, the boys' separate-but-touching brains were gently pushed apart and the tangle of blood vessels they shared were cut and divided.

Between surgeries, the boys were given time to heal and to adapt to their rerouted circulation systems. Originally, veins near Clarence's brain were doing much of the circulation work for both boys, but scans showed dormant veins on Carl's side had "plumped up" and begun working in response to the surgery, lead surgeon Dr. James Goodrich said last week.

Arlene and her mother were at the hospital throughout the operation, getting occasional updates from the doctors.

Virgin Mary

They had sent the feisty dark-haired boys into the operating room with tearful kisses at about 7:30 a.m. Arlene placed a small figure of the Virgin Mary on her sons' gurney, and it stayed with them, on an instrument cart, through the surgery.

The first incision was made at 10 a.m., and at 11 a.m., Goodrich began opening the boys' skulls. He then started separating the veins they still shared.

Goodrich finished operating at about 11 p.m. when Staffenberg began closing the skin covering the skulls.

Just after 4 p.m., Staffenberg said that because there had been "no surprises" in the operating room, the team of surgeons decided to complete the separation.

Strong vital signs

Doctors said the twins had maintained "rock stable" blood pressure and strong vital signs as surgeons began separating their veins at about noon.

Separate lives

Before the operation, Montefiore staff members said that the boys were ready to lead separate lives.

"They have different agendas, and very different personalities," said Dr. Robert W. Marion, the twins' pediatrician. "They are pulling each other in different directions."

The doctors, as well as Montefiore and Blythedale Children's Hospital in Valhalla, where the twins have been living between surgeries and receiving physical therapy, have donated their services. *AP*

Do it via Mar-Noynoy method

From page A1

Mitra said the government should encourage young people to delay marriage and emulate the example set by Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II and Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

"Both bachelors have resisted taking the plunge and the patriotic duty to improve the country's gene pool," Mitra said, referring to the two scions of socially and politically prominent families.

Mitra could well have been referring to himself when he contributed this bit to the raging population debate.

Also a bachelor

At 34, Mitra, political heir to the late Speaker Ramon Mitra, has also remained a bachelor.

Roxas, 47, had readily acknowledged having sired a son with a beauty queen. Aquino, 44, has been linked to a number of women but there are no signs yet that wedding bells are on the horizon.

Incidentally, Roxas, Aquino and Mitra are all members of the Liberal Party.

At the Philippine National Police headquarters, top officials yesterday said they had no problem with the "one-wife" policy proposed by pro-life advocates in an effort to diffuse congressional intentions to limit a Filipino family's children to two.

Rightly or wrongly, cops have a reputation for womanizing.

Don't-do-it campaign

"There should be a don't-do-it campaign," Mitra said, noting that 20 percent of Filipinos were already married by age 19.

Mitra also noted that 70 percent of illegitimate births occurred within the 15-24 age group.

Mitra also pointed out that pre-marital sex was prevalent among the youth, hence the high risk of pregnancies.

Kids having kids

"What use is the two-child policy when this will be observed by young adults unprepared for parenthood and marriage?" Mitra said. "What use are natural planning methods if these will be practiced by kids having kids?"

Mitra said that the government should use its information campaign to encourage the youth to postpone sex until marriage, but better still, to delay the latter.

"It is a simple prescription which all groups on both sides of the population debate—from the Catholic Church to condom manufacturers—agree on, and which none of them has aggressively pushed," Mitra said.

Don't blame me

Someone who has contributed to the population boom does not quite agree.

In a statement, Rep. Crispin Beltran (party-list Anakpawis), who has 10 children, said that the population was not the problem.

"It is a question of government not being able to provide for the Filipino people because of its twisted economic priorities," Beltran said.

Beltran said that he was "offended a little by allegations that the booming population was to blame for the economic woes of the country."

"There is more than enough wealth to go around if only the government didn't use it up through corruption or funneled it towards debt servicing," the former militant labor movement leader said.

Beltran asserted that "more people means a greater, stronger labor force that can build a strong economy."

It's the law

"It's in the law so we should have no problem with that," Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, PNP spokesperson, commented to the INQUIRER about the one-wife proposal.

Goltiao's position was based on the law prohibiting a male Filipino, unless he's a Muslim, from getting married on top of an existing marriage.

He explained that the PNP's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethical Standards barred a police officer from engaging in illicit affairs and other forms of immorality.

With these laws in place, Goltiao said policemen should have no problem with the proposed "one-wife" policy.

Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco, chief of the Philippine Center for Transnational Crime, yesterday enjoined the 115,000-strong PNP to be "morally and spiritually upright."

NPA to free 2 soldiers held in Bicol

From page A1

Fedelino and Nemeno, who were both captured during an encounter in Tinambac town, Camarines Sur, on Feb. 29, are being held by the Romulo Jallores Command of the New People's Army in Bicol.

Peace talks set

Jalandoni, who is in Manila for a series of activities, said the issue on the Army captives was not a precondition for the resumption of formal peace talks set in Norway from Aug. 24 to 30.

Jalandoni explained that the suspension was not a political condition, but merely a part of the standard operating procedure for the release of captives.

"It's difficult to release them when you have many armed police and military men patrolling the area," he said.

A suspension of, say, four weeks would be enough for the NPA to safely turn over the captives to their respective families, assisted by the International Committee of the Red Cross and representatives from the Church and nongovernment organizations, he said.

"We've long been telling the government panel that we're ready to release them and I don't know what's taking them too long to respond," Jalandoni told the INQUIRER, adding that he had personally told chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III of the matter on at least two occasions.

Fedelino's wife earlier appealed to the NPA to free her husband in time for their daughter's birthday. She made the plea at the height of the Angelo de la Cruz hostage crisis in Iraq.

The military subsequently linked the capture to the Iraq hostage crisis after NPA spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal demanded the suspension of military and police operations.

Unrelated to Angelo's case

"The issue is not in any way related to Angelo's case," Jalandoni explained. "The soldiers' capture came much earlier and we've long been saying they'll be released as soon as possible."

But the release of Nemeno—along with 15 political prisoners—would bring more optimism to both the government and NDF panels when they resume talks on social and economic reforms.

32 detainees

The 15 prisoners were among the 32 detainees that the Arroyo administration had promised to release last May 5, as part of the negotiations' confidence-building measures, according to Jalandoni.

Zenaida Llesis, the alleged NPA secretary general who was pregnant when she was arrested in Pangantukan, Bukidnon, on Aug. 5, 2002, had already been released. Her detention sparked controversy when her baby was born with a hole in its heart.

Suspects in Quintos murder

Not included among the 15 detainees are the six Mamburao farmers who were arrested in 1998 for the alleged killing of Michael and Paul Quintos a year before. Jalandoni said authorities arrested another farmer and implicated him in the killing.

The government's failure to release the remaining political prisoners before the new round of Oslo talks would have a negative effect, he said.

"Failure to comply with obligations brings a negative effect (on the peace talks)," Jalandoni said.

He arrived on Sunday to personally check on the progress of the Joint Monitoring Committee, the body tasked to monitor the implementation of the 1998 Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. The committee holds office in Cubao, Quezon City.

The JMC is co-chaired by Prof. Carlos Medina for the government and Fidel Agcaoili for the NDF. Other NDF representatives are Danilo Borjal and Jalandoni's wife Connie Ledesma; while lawyers Edgardo Gayos and Robert Larga represent the government in the committee.

Independent observers

Supreme Bishop Tomas Millamena and Marie Enriquez, who were nominated by the NDF panel, sit as independent observers. The government-nominated observers are Mercedes Contreras Danenberg and Mary Aileen Bacalso.

On Monday, Jalandoni will provide updates on the peace talks at a forum at the University of the Philippines.

Antonio Zumel foundation

He will then attend the launching of the Antonio Zumel Foundation for Journalism and the book on his late comrade's writings the following day, Zumel's 72nd birthday, also at UP.

Zumel was a journalist for 23 years before he went underground and joined the communist movement in 1972. He died on Aug. 13, 2001.

A JOURNEY OF TOGETHERNESS TO LEAD SEPARATE LIVES

ROGER MARGALLO

• SEPT. 10, 2003
Arlene Aguirre (right) and Menchu Sarmiento, PAL Foundation Director (left), carry the 17-month-old conjoined twins Carl and Clarence to the plane that would take them to New York.

PHOTOS BY MONTEFIORE MEDICAL CENTER

• SEPT. 10, 2003
Arrival in New York after a 26-hour flight from Manila.

• SEPT. 12, 2003
The Filipino twins are evaluated at Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM) in the Bronx borough of New York.

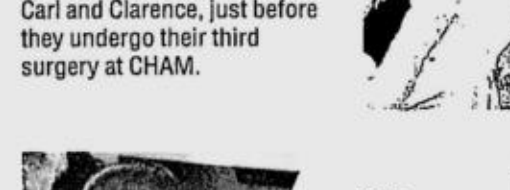
• OCT. 20, 2003
Clarence (left) and Carl Aguirre, resting immediately after their first highly complex surgery at The Children's Hospital at Montefiore.

• NOV. 11, 2003
Dr. David Staffenberg, chief, pediatric plastic surgery, The Children's Hospital at Montefiore, plays "peek-a-boo" with Carl and Clarence.

• NOV. 24, 2003
Here the specialized surgical team at The Children's Hospital begins the delicate and complex process of dividing and tying off major veins shared by the twins.

• DEC. 20, 2003
Clarence (decked out in green) and Carl (festive in red) are entertained with an animated Christmas story by Montefiore Medical Center administrative nurse Clemencia Wong.

• FEB. 20, 2004
David Staffenberg, CHAM, does his daily check-in with Carl and Clarence, just before they undergo their third surgery at CHAM.



• FEB. 21, 2004
Dr. James Goodrich and Dr. Staffenberg give mother Arlene the "end of surgery update" that Carl and Clarence had survived their third and riskiest surgery to date.

JOE VERICKER

• APRIL 2004
Twins turn two: They are shown with their birthday cake and Drs. Robert Marion, Goodrich and Staffenberg.

• JUNE 1, 2004
Clarence, left, and Carl share some of their energy and smiles after removal of tissue expanders.

• AUGUST 5, 2004
Arlene reacts to the news that the team of 16 pediatric specialists, led by Drs. James T. Goodrich and David Staffenberg, successfully separated her twin boys Carl and Clarence.

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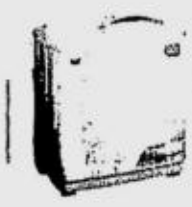

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Expect smaller oil price hikes more often

From page A1

Energy Secretary Vince Perez said.

An industry source said that local oil firms could not wait until next month to pass on the higher costs of imported fuel to motorists via higher pump prices.

World oil prices surged to 21-year highs on Wednesday, fueled by fears that supply disruptions could further constrict the already tight world oil supply.

US crude rose to $44.28 a barrel on Wednesday but slid to $42.93 on Thursday after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries reassured the market of a spare supply of 1 to 1.5 million barrels.

"There is no end in sight to these high prices, with industry analysts seeing the possibility of crude hitting $50 per barrel in the short term," the source said.

Gasoline prices have so far risen seven times this year by a total of P4.70-P4.85 a liter. Diesel prices, on the other hand, have gone up six times by a total of P3.50-P3.65 a liter.

No stopping hikes

Even Perez appears resigned to the fact that the government cannot stop the oil price hikes. "I'm afraid this is something we just have to live with," he said.

"The Department of Energy will run after individuals and companies that will resort to unscrupulous practices such as unfair pricing, especially in this crucial time in the industry. Illegal practices will not be tolerated and we will strictly monitor the industry to protect oil consumers," he warned.

Perez said the government had so far penalized only a few traders and station managers for petty offenses such as diluting their products or adjusting their pump calibration.

Perez conceded that President Macapagal-Arroyo had no short-term solution to the price hikes, but only long term remedies largely centered on improving the supply of indigenous fuel sources such as natural gas and fuel conservation measures.

Two powers

Perez said the President had no authority to step in. "We have only two powers—the power of persuasion and the power of choice by consumers," he said.

Perez said the best the government could do was to request oil companies to make their adjustments in smaller doses and not in one big shot.

Perez said prices were likely to remain at these high levels, especially with the advent of the winter months. "It was so long ago that the return to the $22 to $28 per barrel range of three years ago has become more remote," Perez said.

The benchmark Dubai crude, which oil refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. use as a basis for pricing their products, rose to a historic high of $37.70 a barrel on Wednesday from $37.50 a day earlier.

In July, Dubai crude averaged $34.65 a barrel. For the first four days of August, the average had gone up to $37.42.

Prices of unleaded gasoline and diesel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products, which Caltex Philippines and new oil players use in pricing their products likewise soared to $50.82 for unleaded gasoline and $50.37 for diesel.

In July, the prices of MOPS-based unleaded gasoline and diesel averaged $46.52 and $46.25, respectively. For the first four days of August, the average had gone up to $50.71 for gasoline and $49.81 for diesel.

"A price increase in the near term, therefore, cannot be discounted," the industry source said.

Supply jitters

Driving prices up are supply jitters brought about by the threat of terrorist attacks on oil installations in the Middle East which could disrupt supply and the huge Chinese and American demand.

Also putting pressure on oil prices is the looming collapse of Russian oil firm Yukos which accounts for about 20 percent of Russia's crude supply and is the world's fifth largest crude exporter.

Next to Saudi Arabia, Russia, as a whole, is the second largest crude producer. A disruption in Russian oil supply, therefore, will affect global oil supply.

Refinery capacity cutbacks in South Korea from which the country sources some of its refined petroleum products have also tightened supply.

Informal consultations

To mitigate the impact of higher oil prices, Perez said the DOE would be holding more "informal" consultations with oil firms, particularly with regard to local pump prices.

On Monday, Perez had an informal consultation with oil firms and Consumer and Oil Price Watch chair Raul Concepcion.

"Part of the discussions was that we would implement these informal consultations more often to avoid differences in (amounts) publicized," he said.

Meanwhile, Perez appealed to politicians "to refrain from clouding the oil issue by sending wrong information to the public on rising prices."

No cartel

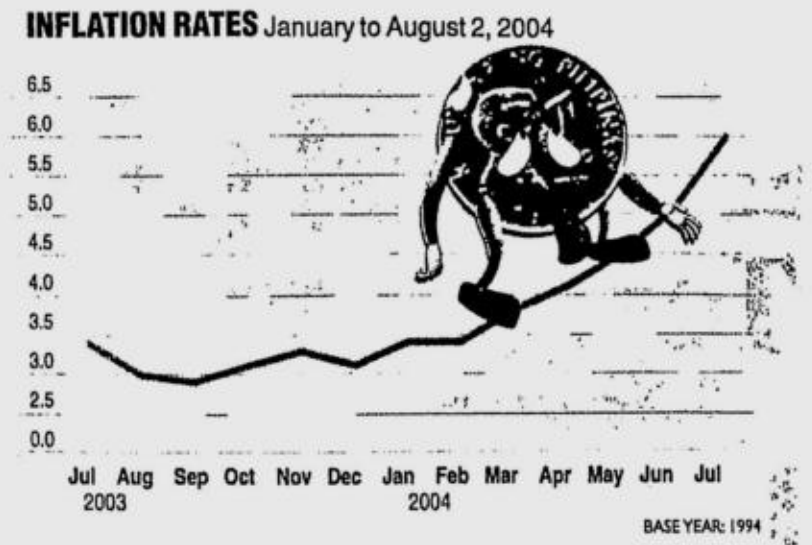
Perez explained that domestic petroleum prices were on the rise not because there was a cartel or the industry was deregulated, but due to rising world crude oil prices.

"There is no one dominant player, there are three large ones. I don't think one alone can influence the price of the other," he said.

But Perez could not explain how the government would determine if an oil price hike was excessive or justified.

The DOE depends largely on the oil companies on how much their 60-day inventory is worth. *With Reuters*

SWAT team members put up a formidable presence at the Philippine Stock Exchange building in the country's financial capital on Thursday. The AFP and the PNP are on high alert. ERIK ARAZAS



Cost of living rising . . .

From page A1

would have been 6.0 percent, the highest since October 2001.

Worrisome

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri warned that record-high crude oil prices in the world market may force the government to adjust upward its inflation targets for this year and the next.

"The worrisome part here is higher oil prices globally, and that could also have a major impact on the equation (government inflation target) for the rest of the year," he said on television.

On Wednesday, oil prices in the world market reached a record high of over $44 a barrel due to concerns over the possibility of supply disruptions. US crude hit $44.28 a barrel on Wednesday, or 13 cents higher than its Tuesday's closing and highest since 1983.

Price of Dubai crude, used as a benchmark by oil companies in the Philippines in pricing their products, soared to a 13-year high of $37.50 a barrel on Tuesday. Since January, oil firms in the country had raised the prices of gasoline seven times and of diesel, six times.

"The sustained high level of oil and other commodities in the global market is expected to put pressure on inflation in the coming months with the probability of breaching the 4.0-5.0 percent mark, the high-end of the inflation target for 2004 and 2005," Neri said in a statement, citing 1994 base-year figures.

He did not give estimates using 2000 as the base year.

Still within target

Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said the average inflation target for the year could still be met.

"For 2004, we will still be within the target range of 4-5 percent with the 6 percent for July," he told Reuters. The central bank uses the 1994 base year inflation figure when setting monetary policy.

"The year to date will be 4.3 percent. We're still well within the target," Tetangco said.

But he said the 2005 inflation target, which is also 4 to 5 percent, could be missed due to rising oil prices, higher transport fares and wages.

He said there was still room to keep overnight interest rates steady.

Analysts said the sharp rise in inflation had raised the chances of an interest rate increase in the coming months.

"This certainly heightens the risk of a BSP rate hike, particularly since the US Fed is expected to hike rates on the 10th of August," said Danny Suwanapruti, an analyst at Forecast in Singapore.

The BSP has not touched its benchmark rates since a cut of 25 basis points in July 2003 that matched a similar move by the US Federal Reserve. The bank's overnight borrowing rate is 6.75 percent and its lending rate is 9.0 percent.

Review, adjust

President Macapagal-Arroyo's economic advisers are to meet shortly to revisit the old target figures, Neri said.

"We will be reviewing it and we'll see to what extent it has to be adjusted if ever," he said.

With petroleum prices rising, "transportation and communication prices (in July) increased 6.1 percent from the previous month as provincial transportation vehicle hiked fares, taking cues from a similar increase in (Manila) in the previous month," Neri said.

The annualized inflation rate for the seven months to July stood at 4.6 percent, using 2000 as the base year.

Supply disruptions

Neri said the higher July inflation figures were also partly influenced by supply disruptions caused by flooding in Mindanao, the country's breadbasket.

They affected the prices of corn, which is used for animal feeds, carabeef used for processed foods, and steel and tin products used in food industry packaging.

"We would like to see how food prices behave in (August) because food already comprises 40 percent of the expenditures of ordinary households," he said. "So if food prices become more moderate, then inflation overall will be more moderate despite anticipated increases in oil prices."

Neri noted that the factors putting upward pressure on consumer prices in July "are basically supply-side inflation so therefore demand-side measures will be practically useless."

Weak on supply side

He said the government would have to work on the supply side of the equation, and "basically a more efficient transport and logistic system will help."

While inflation is seen to peak next year, the BSP is expecting a return to the 4-5 percent range by 2006.

Based on the BSP's simulations, inflation rate may shoot up to an average of 5.2 to 5.9 percent next year or way above the government's targets without policy interventions.

Variables

The BSP's new projection factored in supply-side factors such as rising oil prices, adjustments in transport and utility charges as well as the implementation of wage hike petitions in 2005.

Other variables include market concerns over the fiscal deficit and the movement of the peso-dollar exchange rate. *Reports from Michelle V. Remo, Doris C. Dumlao, AFP and Reuters*

GMA, Noli: We did not cheat—they did

From page A1

Ms Arroyo and De Castro said their votes were either counted in favor of their opponents or were considered stray votes.

Fishing expedition

The President urged the PET to immediately dismiss the election protest against her, saying that it was a mere "fishing expedition" since Poe did not specify how, when and in what precincts he was allegedly cheated.

The Vice President urged the tribunal to dismiss Legarda's protest against him because she allegedly merely "copied" Poe's election protest and "delusions" right down to the "mistakes, numbering and even to the font."

For one, Legarda said in her protest that the court should set aside De Castro's proclamation after determining that she had won the "highest number of votes for President."

De Castro also noted that Legarda repeatedly referred to the position of "President" as the position in contention in her petition. She also referred several times to De Castro as a female, indicating that she was addressing her allegations to Ms Arroyo.

Jurisdiction issue

Arroyo and De Castro added that the protests should be dismissed "outright" since they were "insufficient" in form and substance and were actually calling for the declaration of a failure of elections, which falls within the "exclusive jurisdiction" of the Commission on Elections.

"It is readily apparent that Poe merely speculates about the alleged irregularities maliciously stated in the instant protest in the vain hope that his fishing expedition would yield results. Otherwise, he would have been able to specify the precincts where the particular irregularities took place," Ms Arroyo said.

Cavalier manner

"To permit ... a petition of protest where precincts are not identified with sufficient particularity would meah allowing Poe to conduct a fishing expedition and would unduly prolong the contest," she added.

The President said Poe relied on "a general and scattershot" approach by "using general averments" in his protest and this was "indicative" of Poe's "cavalier manner" in treating the election protest process.

"Such general allegations are not only false, groundless and imagined, they also constitute a malicious blanket indictment of the integrity and intelligence of the entire Filipino electorate, not to mention the public school teachers and other civil servants, who conscientiously performed their duties during the last elections," Ms Arroyo said.

"Evidently, these general allegations were made in an attempt to engage in a fishing expedition, at the expense of the integrity of the dedicated men and women who manned every stage of the electoral process," she added.

Citizenship unresolved

The President again raised the question of Poe's citizenship, saying that the Supreme Court did not rule categorically in March that the actor was a natural-born Filipino citizen.

"Thus, the unresolved issue of whether or not Poe is a natural-born Filipino citizen has to be resolved by the honorable tribunal to determine whether or not (he) has a legal standing to institute the instant protest," Ms Arroyo said.

Copying verbatim

While the President questioned Poe's citizenship, De Castro beat down on Legarda for copying "verbatim" her running mate's protest and signing it without "fully knowing its contents."

De Castro said Legarda "failed to attribute any form" of electoral fraud to him in her "ghost of a" protest and instead imputed the alleged irregularities to Ms Arroyo.

"An examination of the protest makes it painfully clear that (Legarda) does not have any grievance of her own. It was quite obvious that to manufacture her own cause, (she) lifted her protest from that of (Poe) against President Macapagal-Arroyo verbatim," he said.

Laughable

"The reference to (Arroyo) and not to the protestee would have been excusable had it been a clerical error; but such repeated errors cease to be pardonable and becomes downright laughable, if not irritating, since it is a manifestation that (she) dared to misuse this honorable court's power to sit as a final arbiter for the presidential and vice presidential elections with a concocted protest," De Castro added.

He said that it should be emphasized that allegations against the President "would not automatically apply" to him.

De Castro said that while they were running mates in the last elections, they did not belong to the same party since he ran as an independent.

Silly move

"It's a silly move," said a Poe spokesperson, referring to the Arroyo-De Castro counter-protest seeking a recount in areas where the actor had won overwhelmingly, particularly in Metro Manila. *With a report from Reuters*

Journalist gunned down in Batangas; 54th since 1986

From page A1

tabloid Bulgar and radio station dzRH, was shot in the face and neck by two unidentified men along the national highway in Bauan, Batangas. He was taken to the Bauan Municipal Hospital where he was declared dead by doctors.

Manalo is the third journalist to be killed in Southern Tagalog in less than a year. The other fatalities were Polly Pobeda of Lucena City and Noel Villarante of Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

On Saturday, Roger Mariano, a hard-hitting broadcaster, was killed in Ilocos Norte.

Manalo is the 54th murdered media practitioner in the country since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP).

The killing shocked Manalo's colleagues at the Batangas Newswriters Association (BNA), who said he had never mentioned any threats on his life. The victim, who wrote for the Southern Tagalog Public Forum based in Tanauan City and for Veritas based in Batangas City, served as auditor of the group.

Arnell Ozaeta, BNA president, described Manalo as a "straight" journalist and soft-spoken.

Dangerous places for journalists in RP	Number of Journalists killed since 1986
Davao City	6
South Cotabato and Gen. Santos	4
Laguna	4
Pagadian City	4
Quezon City	4
Zamboanga City	4
Cotabato	3
Iligan City	3
Mindoro Or. and Occ.	3
Quezon Province	3
Tuguegarao, Cagayan	3
Bacolod City	2
Cavite	2
Cebu City	2
Cotabato City	2
Legaspi City	2
Pampanga	2
Others	24
Total	77

Sources: PDI Archives/ NUJP/ Internet website
Inqgraphic: Ernie Sambo

"His commitment and professionalism to his profession was untainted," Ozaeta said. "He did not need to resort to any hanky-panky because he was financially stable. He had his own garment business."

"He was not hard-hitting. In fact, he always saw to it that his stories were balanced and he found a way to talk with parties involved in any of his articles," he said.

Road attack

Police officers said they had yet to establish the motive for the killing. Manalo's wife Leony said she did not have any idea if he had been receiving death threats as he did not talk about his job.

Senior Supt. Francisco Montenegro, Batangas police chief, said Manalo, who was driving his jeep, had just dropped off his two children at the Sta. Teresa College, about 500 meters from his house, and had picked up his brother, Apollo, at the public market when he was attacked.

The two gunmen, who were aboard a red Kawasaki motorcycle and wore crash helmets, suddenly cut into the path of the jeep in Barangay Manghinao 1, police said. One of them approached Manalo and shot him.

Apollo was unharmed and later told police that the assailants were only after his brother.

Unsolved killings

"With Polly's death and the murder of other colleagues in different parts of the country, mostly still unsolved, here comes now the death of Arnel Manalo. We reiterate our appeal to the powers-that-be to please stop using journalists as cannon fodder in their power struggle," Johnny Glorioso, senior adviser to the Quezon Tri-Media Group, said.

"The killing of Manalo and others only manifests the deteriorating state of press freedom in the region," said Dennis Esplanada, NUJP coordinator in Laguna.

"There can be no press freedom if journalists live in fear, poverty and corruption. There's a need for media persons to collectively act in protest against the killing of Manalo."

BNA officials called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to act immediately to protect the country's media workers from further violence.

Endangered species

"At the rate media workers are being killed, we'll soon become an endangered species. The President should do something about this alarming situation," Ozaeta said.

He urged police authorities to speed up the investigation into the killing and arrest the suspects as soon as possible.

Cowardly

"This cowardly act to silence media men is simply disheartening. Manalo was a good man. He was not corrupt nor had he done anything to malign anybody. The government should act to protect local journalists who put their lives on the line just to be of service to others." he said. *With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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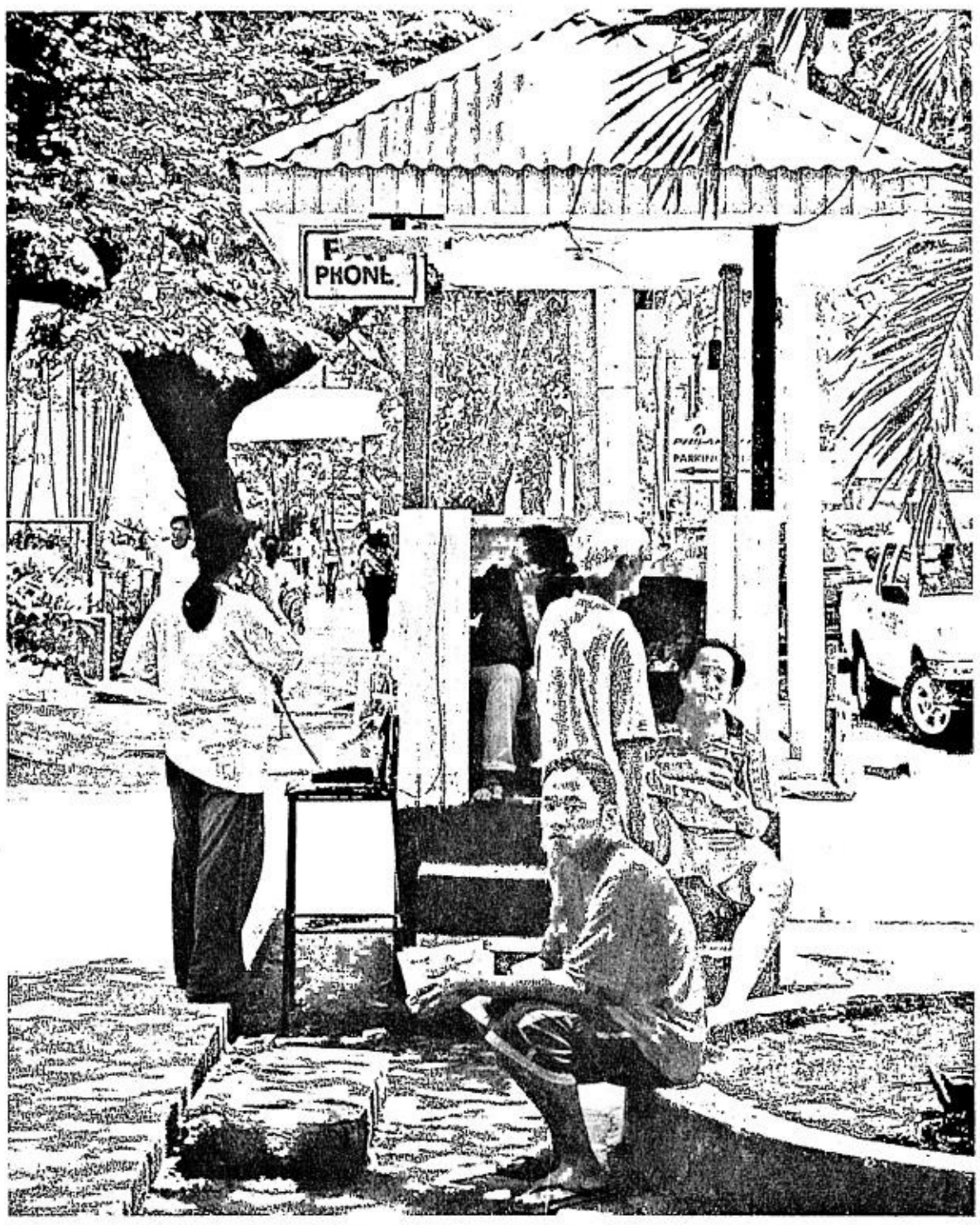
Tenants won't budge from 'unsafe' homes



PAY PHONE BOOTH OR OUTPOST? It looks like a police outpost, but this structure in front of the Station 5 Police Station has a pay phone stand and a cigarette vending outlet for passersby. RUDY ESPERAS

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FOR CLOSE to 40 years, home for Malou Basco, a 38-year-old housewife, had always been a two-story structure at the corner of Mayhaligue and Anacleto Streets near Rizal Avenue in Manila.

Last year, she was told that she would have to move out.

Her home was one of the 10 houses and 11 rows of apartments in 21 spots in the city that had been condemned by the Committee on Buildings of the Office of the Building Official of Manila.

Guillermo Geronaga Jr., a civil engineer and chair of the city committee said many tenants of condemned homes risk living in the dilapidated structures mainly because many of them have businesses on the ground floor of these buildings.

Others simply don't have anywhere else to go, Geronaga added.

"The homes are structurally unsafe. The columns are termite infested, the beams are weak, the ceilings dilapidated. We also noticed that the floors had already sagged," explained Geronaga, who worked with a committee of four engineers that looked into the status of the condemned buildings since 2003.

Demolition notice

Basco had paid a monthly rent of P1,500 for her unit, one of seven in the block of apartments, until the owner, Johnny Wu, had been sent a demolition notice before Christmas last year. Since then, Wu had stopped asking for the rent since the block was declared no longer safe for occupancy.

"This is not fair and we feel we are being harassed. During the holidays, we received a demolition notice, and we were given 15 days to leave our homes. We won't let them do that to us," said Basco, saying that the owner only wanted to evict them and sell the lot.

The notice was sent after a petition for a building inspection was requested by Wu, Basco claimed.

The houses are older than her 58-year-old mother, Basco said, adding that with the yearly renovations, their homes have been holding up just fine. "The wooden beams and foundations are old but are solid and of good quality," she explained.

Only the walls dividing the houses are made of concrete. The roofs, now rusty, had never been replaced since the houses were built, oldtimers in the neighborhood said.

Civil engineer Paul Resterio, who inspected the houses on Nov. 7, 2003 upon the request of the residents, cited in his report that the house needed "only regular and good maintenance," and that demolition "is not the right solution unless the owner has other purposes or motives."

The assessment served as the residents' argument against the owner's claim that the houses are unsafe.

Despite the decision by the buildings committee, the residents appealed their case to the Department of Public Works and Highways. They also rejected Wu's offer of P10,000 for each resident on the condition that he leave.

Four homes in other areas had already been torn down and five had been issued demolition orders, with its owners obliged to pay for the cost of the demolition.

Ten cases are on appeal at the DPWH, and two had been forwarded for appeal to Malacañang.

Five houses had been found unsafe for habitation in Sta. Cruz, four in Tondo and Sampaloc, three in Sta. Mesa, two in Sta. Ana and Paco, and one in Malate. Two cases involving structures in Tondo had also been submitted for resolution, while hearings are ongoing for cases involving seven more houses under petition for condemnation in Tondo, Sta. Cruz, Sta. Ana and Sampaloc.

And other petitions from concerned citizens and building owners continue to flood their office.

More petitions

"We receive at least 15 cases every month, and everyday, we have a hearing. We resolve around two or three a month," said Geronaga.

Last July 23, the eight-story Sai Building in Tondo came crashing down, and an investigation is ongoing to determine the cause of the collapse.

Possible structural defects was among the angles being looked into by investigators.

But who would account for damages caused to neighboring buildings?

Civil engineer Benito Pacheco, chairman of the Office of Civil Defense's volunteer group Disaster Quick Response Team, has a simple answer.

"In general terms, the owner of the building takes responsibility, not City Hall," said Pacheco, who is also a member of the committee formed by City Hall to investigate the collapse.

He explained that the owner's responsibility begins while the building is still under construction, as stated in the National Building Code.

The law also holds liable professionals involved in the construction.

These include architects and contractors, among others.

Arrest of 3 cops snags city's drive vs drugs

By Luige del Puerto

IT LOOKS like Mandaluyong City's campaign against illegal drugs has hit a snag.

Under a new system put in place last month, anti-narcotics units had been reduced to seven-man teams. No one else may arrest or operate these except them. The move was meant to check abuses within the police's antidrug program.

But on Wednesday, three members of the city's antinarcotics team were arrested and detained for various offenses. That practically left the team without enough manpower.

Yesterday, the office of the city's Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) was momentarily closed. When the INQUIRER checked, none of the four remaining DEU officers were present.

Ongoing

Sr. Supt. Ericson Velasquez, city police chief, assured the public that the city's antidrug campaign continues. Those being detained would be replaced, he said.

"I have instructed the remaining officers to directly report to me," he said.

Velasquez has initiated the city's own investigation into what happened on Wednesday.

The Mandaluyong Police has raised concerns about the way the high-profile arrest of its cops was conducted.

Concerns

In his report to the district chief, Velasquez said the raid should have been coordinated with the regional or district police headquarters to avoid a possible misencounter.

"A misencounter must also be considered in the conduct of the operation," Velasquez said, adding that the purpose of the operation might outweigh the result, particularly if there are casualties.

Security guard foils Navotas bank robbery

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

THINGS were going according to plan until a security guard foiled what could have been a million-peso bank robbery in Navotas yesterday morning.

Police said that about 5 a.m. yesterday, 15 armed robbers posing as security guards entered the Metrobank Branch in H. Lopez Street in Navotas and were ready to strike.

But William Olindo, who was ready to report to his post, became suspicious when he saw an unfamiliar face guarding the door.

The robber pulled Olindo inside the bank, but Olindo managed to punch the robber.

The robbers fired at Olindo as he ran for help, but missed, leaving them no choice but to flee.

Earlier, the robbers abducted Ricardo Rodriguez and Emilio Cano in front of another Metrobank Branch in Timog Avenue, Quezon City, at about 1 a.m., and also took their Pajero that the robbers used for the aborted Navotas heist.

On the way, the robbers took the two victims' valuables after tying their hands with shoelaces.

When they reached the bank at H. Lopez Street, some of the robbers posed as policemen and told bank security guard Wilfredo Aquino that they were responding to an alarm received from the bank.

NAVOTAS police stand guard in front of the Metrobank building along Northbay Boulevard in Navotas after an aborted bank robbery early yesterday morning. JOAN BONDOC

Aquino was told to show his ID "for record purposes."

As Aquino opened the door to give his ID, the men got his firearm and told him to open the back door. The robbers then hogtied two other security guards who said they were about to withdraw money at the automated teller machine when they ran into the suspects.

One of the robbers told Aquino to strip, got the duty security guard's uniform, ready to pose as a security guard, anticipating the arrival of the bank employees.

Olindo arrived just in time. After fighting the robbers off, and narrowly escaping being shot at, he ran to a gas station for help.

The robbers then decided to flee.

Except for the valuables they took from the two victims they had abducted in Quezon City, the robbers left the scene empty-handed.

But the robbery spree did not end there. They also took off with a L300 van that crossed their path, and made good their escape.

MMDA eyes guidelines on billboard installation

By Margaux C. Ortiz

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando has proposed the creation of guidelines on the installation of billboards and signages along the metropolis' thoroughfares.

Fernando said the absence of such a regulation has led to the indiscriminate and unsafe installation of signages along Metro Manila's roads.

"This dangerous practice has caused several reported incidents of billboards and signs falling and endangering the lives of motorists and pedestrians," Fernando said. "We have to seriously consider the aspect of safety."

The billboards and advertisement signs also compete with the road safety signs of the MMDA and local government unit, Fernando added.

He said that with implementing guidelines, the unscrupulous putting up of billboards and signages along major and secondary thoroughfares, avenues, streets, roads and parks would be penalized accordingly.

Court denies Bebs Reyes pleas

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NOW AMONG Manila's 10 most wanted, Bebs Reyes appears to have lost one more battle.

The Manila Regional Trial Court yesterday denied two motions filed by Reyes' lawyer, Rico Bolongaita, appealing his client's indictment for the rape-slay of bank teller Candice Castro.

Judge Reynaldo Alhambra yesterday released his resolution denying Bolongaita's motion to defer court proceedings and recall the arrest warrant against Reyes filed on July 28.

The court also turned down another motion the defense filed on July 30, asking the court to determine probable cause, and the same pleas sought by the earlier motion.

On July 26, rape and homicide charges were filed against Reyes and Philippe Marcelo, who had pointed to Reyes as the one who had raped and killed Castro.

Marcelo had been detained since he was arrested after Castro was found dead in her Vellagio Tower unit on Leon Guinto Street, Malate, Manila.

But Reyes, son of a Bureau of Immigration investigation officer, remains at large.

Bolongaita had claimed that the Manila Prosecutors Office resolution indicting Reyes was done with a "lack of impartiality."

He also alleged that the only evidence the prosecution had was Marcelo's statement to police tagging Reyes as the alleged killer.

"Finding probable cause does not require an inquiry on whether there is sufficient evidence to secure a conviction. Precisely, there is a trial to allow more evidence to be filed," the court ruled.

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza welcomes Yokohama City Councilor Kiyoshi Hanaue, who went to the City Hall recently to deliver the message of Yokohama City Mayor Hiroshi Nakada about the strengthening of the relations of the sister cities, which will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year.

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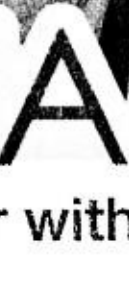

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GMA wishes RP bets all the best

By Marc Anthony Reyes

"I AM praying for your success, and wish you all the best."

Huddled with seven of the 16 athletes bound for the Athens Olympics, President Macapagal-Arroyo whispered those words of encouragement during yesterday's courtesy call by the Philippine team in Malacañang.

The President said she's confident the athletes will give it their best shot during the Aug. 13-29 Olympiad. The other members of the lean contingent will fly straight to Greece from countries where they are currently training.

Present during the send-off were Thsomlee Go, Donald Geisler and Ma. Antoinette Rivero of taekwondo, Jethro Dionisio of shooting, Timmy Chua of swimming, Jasmin

GMA/ A29

THE PRESIDENT flashes the thumbs-up sign with athletes Go, Geisler, Rivero, Dionisio, Chua and Figueroa, PSC chair Eric Buhain, Rep. Monico Puentevella, POC president Cito Dayrit, chef de mission Steve Hontiveros and delegation officials during the RP Olympians' courtesy call yesterday in Malacañang.

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Olympic coverage on; Jemah backs NBN

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE COUNTRY'S top athletes will be seen "live" starting next week as they fight for glory in the Athens Olympics.

NBN-4 officials made this assurance yesterday in a press conference where they announced full coverage of the Olympic campaign by 16 Filipino athletes in six events on Aug. 13-29.

With its financial woes over, the government station said it would start its telecast next week with the backgrounds and records of the RP squad composed of five swimmers, four boxers, three taekwondo-jins, two tracksters, one shooter and one archer.

The NBN Olympic coverage will be done in partnership with Jemah Television, led by chair Mark Roces. Jemah TV, which brought last year's Vietnam Southeast Asian Games action to local TV, will handle the marketing for the Olympic coverage, dubbed as the "Golden Glory in Greece, Games of the Athens Olympics."

Tim Orbos, NBN-4 president, said the coverage is a result of a collective effort of both the government and the private sector which pooled their resources to give Filipino fans a chance to root for their countrymen in Athens.

"That gives us a chance to see the highlights of the Games and focus on the events where the Philippines is taking part," NBN-4 chair Mia Concio added.

She said the local station will get three satellite feeds from the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union. NBN will choose which feed to beam on local TV.

She added that athletics, swimming and boxing will be given extensive coverage, while footages will be shown from shooting and archery which are traditionally not covered in full by the ABU.

The President has already authorized the release of funds to help NBN pay its arrears with the International Olympic Committee which amounted to $1.2 million for its 2000 Sydney coverage. That is on top of the $600,000 required for the Athens coverage.

Athens telecast savior thanked

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo takes the medal for bringing the participation of RP athletes in the Athens Olympics to Filipino homes, but an adventurous television firm president was given full credit yesterday for reviving coverage negotiations with the International Olympic Committee after it hit the dead-end last month.

Marc Roces, head of Jemah Television which also covered last year's Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, was thanked and singled out by Frank Elizalde, the IOC representative in the Philippines, for saving the coverage.

"There was no more possibility of this year's Olympics being beamed to the Philippines. There was no other way to have the negotiations with the IOC ... revived, but Marc Roces came to me and asked that we give it a final shot," Elizalde told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Roces offered $300,000 seed money for the National Broadcasting Network to be able to restart negotiations with the IOC.

Elizalde said that after Roces vowed support for the coverage, he called up the IOC to give the dead deal one last try.

Happily, the IOC agreed to bring the deal back to the starting block, so to say, and as of yesterday it was all systems go.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin announced that, upon the instructions of the President, all the financial matters on the Olympic coverage have been put into place.

"I cannot overstate the value of what Mr. Roces had done, he jumpstarted the negotiations after we had all given up," explained NBN chair Mia Concio, who has inherited the odd role of having to pay the arrears of his predecessors with the IOC.

NBN general manager Joey Isabelo said Ms Arroyo was the happiest person after she was able to save the Olympic coverage.

Elizalde, who leaves for Athens Saturday, and Roces are office neighbors in Makati.

Recah Trinidad

BUENAVISTA sets sights on Philippine marathon record. PDI PHOTO

COUNTDOWN TO ATHENS

Modest aim for Gabito, Buenavista

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A BOY among men.

That's Eduardo "Vertek" Buenavista when he competes against the world's top marathoners in the Athens Olympics.

Barely 4-foot-11, Buenavista will virtually disappear from view when he runs alongside a fleet of 6-footers from Africa, America, Europe and the former Soviet states in the Games' closing event on Aug. 29.

Buenavista knows his tiny steps would be no match to the gigantic strides of his rivals, so he has set a modest goal: Break his Philippine record (2 hours, 18 minutes, 44 seconds) for the 42K.

"It's going to be hard competing against the world's best in the Olympics but if I beat my own RP record, I can finish within the top 10," Buenavista said in Filipino while taking a break from his rigid, high-altitude training in Baguio City.

The 25-year-old Buenavista said apart from his daily training on the road and track, his preparation for his second Olympic stint includes a biweekly run from the Philippine Sports Commission facilities near Teachers' Village down to Bauang, La Union.

Buenavista said he negotiates the cross-provincial roads to La Union with fellow runner Rene Herrera in three hours, meaning the distance he normally covers is more than the standard 42.195K.

A father of a 3-year-old boy, Buenavista transplanted his family from Sto. Nino, South Cotabato, to Baguio City, where most of the RP tracksters are billeted.

The existing Olympic record (2:08) is achievable, according to Buenavista, but he fears runners from Africa will be breaking that mark this time as they are accustomed to the heat and humidity prevailing in Athens at this time.

GABITO: Bidding for long jump glory. PDI PHOTO

In Sydney, Buenavista competed in the 3,000-meter steeplechase but was booted out in the heats.

Now, he's hoping for the best.

"It will just boil down to physical condition right on competition day," said Buenavista, who'll be carrying the country's colors in athletics with long jumper Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito.

Gabito qualified in the long jump competition in the Sri Lankan leg of the Asian Grand Prix this year.

Like Buenavista, Gabito is eyeing to re-write the national record which she shares with the legendary Elma Muros-Posadas.

"If I could jump 6.60 meters, I can think of retiring already," said the 29-year-old Gabito, who matched the RP mark of 6.56 m in winning the bronze during the Manila Grand Prix leg last month.

Gabito was initially listed in the 100-meter dash as part of the country's mandatory participation in the Olympic track and field competitions before qualifying in her favorite event.

"I know that I don't stand a chance there," she said of the 100-meter dash she competed in in the Sydney Games. "In the long jump, all you need is a flash of brilliance."

For Buenavista it's tougher. He has to keep a steady pace, strain to match his opponents' long gaits and try to pull away before the final turn, where he's vulnerable in the sprint for home.

That's the only way the boy could make the men take notice.

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Not in the winning

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

NOW that the NBN coverage of the Athens Olympics has become a done deal—thanks for once to GMA, who made it all possible—cynics are back to their heckling ways.

They ask: Why the hell do we need to televise the exploits of sure losers in the Olympics? It would just be a waste of money, if not time. Better that the P33-million budget for the Olympic coverage be used for some project that would directly help alleviate the conditions of the marginalized and the poverty-stricken among our populace.

Sounds nice but then, there is a time for every thing, money for every thing. There is a time for love, time for family, time for worship, time for work, time for play. There's even a time for war, if you ask George W. Bush.

Athens is definitely play, the Olympics pleasure. And each time an opportunity for play presents itself, we should grab it without hesitation. Even God had to grab the opportunity to rest on the seventh day; rest is pleasure—has always been.

Thirty-three million bucks is a lot of money. But then, man can't live by moolah alone. He also ought to have some fun to make life worth living.

Look at the Greeks. They are also mired in economic woes. But they are proving to be good hosts of the Olympics because their budget alone for security has breached the billion-dollar mark. As I write this, their budget for sophisticated security measures—a main feature of it is it can detect a bomb embedded in a person's gut a thousand yards away—is $1.2 billion (P67.2 billion). That makes our P33-million coverage budget mere peanuts.

Sure, to see our athletes getting whipped left and right in the Olympics will always not be a sight to behold. It can be a nightmare at times.

But then, there's also a beauty to that, and don't accuse me of being a masochist, sadist even, for saying that. Farthest from the truth.

The pain of seeing our own bowing to a much superior specimen has always been part of human tragedy because Third World reality says its inhabitants are almost always no match to First World combatants, save in running events like marathon which Africans consider their bread and butter since time immemorial. For obvious reasons, that is.

It is more painful though to see our own, say a boxer, losing when we know beforehand he cannot lose. Like when we saw our own boxer in Sydney seemingly ready to win it, only to lose because of a tactical error of the Cuban coach manning our corner. You saw that fight on TV (I saw it from ringside as I covered the 2000 Sydney Games) and I know some of you must have gritted your teeth, even wept afterwards maybe, because of a sure victory slipping us by.

But you applaud, you weep, it doesn't make a difference. Thing is, you saw it all happen, felt a tingle in your spine, experienced the thrill, if not the pain, stabbing your very senses. If TV weren't there, what use would our conversations about the Sydney Olympics be?

KJ they will always be, these cynics, if not downright hecklers.

Of course, it is almost a certainty that we may end up losers again in the Olympics, the way we did in Sydney, when we came home empty-handed. That was a shame, especially because we won a boxing silver in Atlanta in 1996 through Onyok Velasco.

But that's no reason we shouldn't be covering our 16 Olympians do their thing in Athens on Aug. 13-29. Nope.

Much unlike politics, sports is not all about winning. Sad as it may seem, it is also about losing. Call me a nut, a simpleton if you will, but the loser is as important as the winner because without the loser, you won't have a winner. As one great athlete said: "How can I be great if I don't have someone to beat?"

And so we are going to Athens then as mere cannon fodders?

Not really. We are going there as part of mankind "celebrating humanity" once in four years. That's all there is to it. If we are to reprise once more our role as the so-called whipping boys in this biggest sports spectacle on Earth, so what? We are anyway all role players here, aren't we?

There are really many ways at looking at a competition.

Many say winning is everything. Others say winning is the only thing. Still others use Coubertin's Olympic slogan as their guiding principle: It is not in the winning but rather in the playing.

For you, dear fellas, which is the best option?

To just win?

To win at all costs?

Or to just play your best, not worried one bit if your best will make you a winner or not.

The first option makes you a winner already even before you were born.

The second makes you a sore loser, that's why you'll do everything to win, by hook or by crook.

The third makes you the purist: Sports is all about competing, not winning.

I guess by sending Mama Mia's NBN to Athens—Milton "Mr. Iceman" Alingod should tip his hat for his role in helping make it happen, please?—GMA, sure, has a firm grasp of what the third option means.

The hecklers can go shout their voices hoarse at the top of Mt. Olympus, but for that singular act of courage, GMA deserves my applause.

***

FASTBREAK. Dream Satellite will partner with NBN in the coverage of the Athens Olympics on Aug. 13-29. Dream will also beam the PGA Championship live starting Aug. 13, with a 1-hour feature of the fourth and last golf major of the year on ABC-5. After the PGA comes the Ryder Cup—another Dream Satellite blockbuster event.

Manotoc ties for 4th with 72

TOMMY Manotoc ignored back pains on the final six holes Wednesday to salvage a one-over-par 72 at The Berkshire's Blue course and tie for fourth place at the start of the British Senior Open Amateur championship in England.

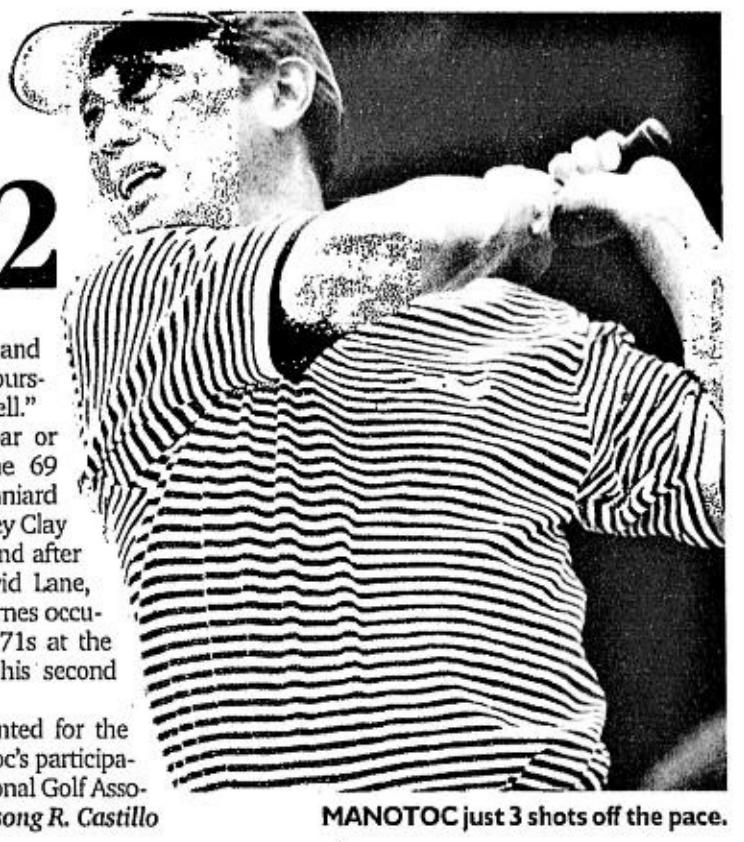
The 55-year-old Calatagan Golf Club manager nailed down four birdies against five bogeys, the last three coming on the last four holes, and found himself trailing Irishman Michael Malone by three heading into the final two rounds.

Defending champion Roy Smethurst struggled with a 75 over the Red course, failing to take advantage of ideal conditions like more than half of the 256-man field.

"There was very little wind and it was hot," Manotoc told the INQUIRER over the phone. "I played with a hurting back, and could have done better. The courses here suit my game pretty well."

Only six players scored par or better, and none among the 69 Americans in the field. Spaniard Luis Javier Trenor and Geoffrey Clay of England were in joint second after similar 70s. Englishmen David Lane, Alan Squires and Norman Barnes occupy third position after level 71s at the Red, where Manotoc plays his second round today.

The Philippines is represented for the first time in the event. Manotoc's participation is sanctioned by the National Golf Association of the Philippines. *Musong R. Castillo*

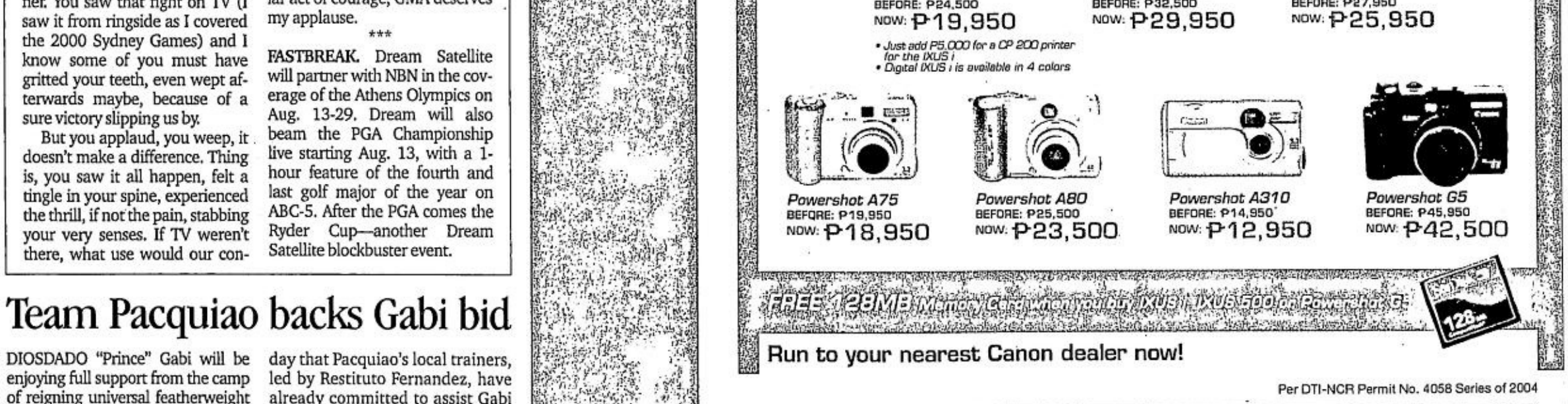


MANOTOC just 3 shots off the pace.

Team Pacquiao backs Gabi bid

DIOSDADO "Prince" Gabi will be enjoying full support from the camp of reigning universal featherweight king Manny Pacquiao in his quest to capture the World Boxing Council flyweight crown in October.

Promoter Soc Piñol said yesterday that Pacquiao's local trainers, led by Restituto Fernandez, have already committed to assist Gabi in his Oct. 8 showdown with WBC flyweight boss Pongsaklek Wongjongkam in Phuket, Thailand. *Salven L. Lagumbay*



Enrile back for Knights

DEFENDING champion Letran tries to rebound from back-to-back losses when the Knights collide with the winless St. Benilde Blazers today in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Knights, with Ronjay Enrile back in their lineup after a one-game suspension, are heavily favored over the Blazers in their 4 p.m. clash.

San Sebastian hopes to get even with Jose Rizal in their 2 p.m. encounter. The Bombers stunned the Stags in their first-round meeting, 81-79, via a buzzer-beating triple by Wynsjohn Te.

Meanwhile, the race for the Most Valuable Player award produced surprising results at the end of the first round with two Blazers among the top three contenders.

GAMES TODAY
(*Rizal Coliseum*)
11:30 a.m.—JRU vs San Sebastian (Jrs)
2 p.m.—JRU vs San Sebastian (Srs)
4 p.m.—St. Benilde vs Letran (Srs)
6 p.m.—St. Benilde vs Letran (Jrs)

St. Benilde center Ernie Sagad led the race with an average of 14.6 points, 10.6 rebounds and 3 assists, while point guard Paolo Orbeta ranked third with 18.3 ppg, 6.6 rpg and 3.9 apg.

Early favorites Enrile of Letran and Noy Javier of the leading University of Perpetual Help surprisingly finished second and 10th, respectively.

Enrile finished with 14.7 ppg and 4.2 rpg, while Javier emerged as the league-leading scorer with a 21.4 average.

Rookie Gabriel Espinas of PCU topped the rebounding department with 11 rpg. Another rookie, Dean Apor of Perpetual, led in assists with 6.3 apg.

Reigning MVP Leo Najorda of San Sebastian took the fourth spot in the MVP race with averages of 12.6 points and 7.9 rebounds. *Jasmine W. Payo*

NCFP man slaps WIM Mariano

TROUBLE just won't give local chess a break.

Yesterday, National Chess Federation of the Philippines employee Chad Fang slapped Woman International Master Christine Rose Mariano after an exchange of heated words while the player was claiming her paycheck at the Philippine Sports Commission offices.

Mariano said Fang, a nephew of NCFP secretary general Sammy Estimo, was irked when she asked why somebody signed for the payroll of WIM Joy Lomibao, who is currently competing in Malaysia.

"He (Fang) told me to shut up and mind my own business," said Mariano, adding that when she tried to head for the exit, Fang blocked her path, his arm coming into contact with her chest.

Mariano, sister of Grandmaster Nelson Mariano II, said she tried to shove Fang away but the latter slapped her in the face.

MARIANO

Witnesses said the two had cursed each other before the slapping incident.

Mariano, accompanied by her brother and GM Joey Antonio, and Fang later filed charges and countercharges at the Western Police District Station 9.

Mariano II and Antonio were in a meeting with PSC chair Eric Buhain during the incident.

The NCFP has been in the center of controversy after a faction led by Antonio and fellow GM Bong Villamayor accused Estimo of irregularities in the disbursement of funds. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Eagles rise to 6-0, face Tams next

By Jasmine W. Payo

SLAM-DUNKING JC Intal delivered another monster performance with 20 points and 14 rebounds to lead the Ateneo Blue Eagles over National University, 67-56, for their sixth straight win in the 67th UAAP varsity basketball tournament yesterday at the Philsports Arena.

Ateneo, which last raced to a 6-0 start in 1988, is the only undefeated team in the league. The Eagles, now playing minus injured main man Larry Fonacier, gun for a first-round sweep against defending champion Far Eastern on Sunday.

In the other varsity match, FEU quelled a University of the Philippines' fourth-quarter run to hack out a 63-56 win and keep solo second at 5-1.

Tailenders NU and UP took their sixth consecutive setbacks.

Intal sparked Ateneo's 14-6 run in the third period after a 33-33 deadlock at halftime. Bajjie del Rosario capped the onslaught with a triple and a jumper to give Ateneo a 47-39 lead.

Cyrus Malagueño drilled a three-pointer midway in the fourth quarter as the Bulldogs closed in at 55-52, but Intal and Paolo Bugia kept the Eagles afloat.

LA Tenorio and Magnum Membrere, who scored eight points apiece, then canned their free-throws in the final 30 seconds for a 65-56 margin.

"We were able to pull it off in the final minutes. JC is doing a lot of things for us. LA also played well and we're getting steady support from the other players," said coach Sandy Arespacochaga.

NU's offensive leader, Rey Mendoza, struggled the entire game, scoring his sole basket early in the first quarter.

Fonacier, who's still recovering from a recent knee operation, sat behind the Ateneo bench together with former teammate Enrico Villanueva.

Veterans Mark Isip and Dennis Miranda, who finished with 19 and 16 points, respectively, gave FEU a 10-point buffer at the end of the third period.

UST's Tiger Cubs also made it six straight as they beat the Bullpups, 73-64, in junior play. The Eaglets downed the Baby Falcons, 74-53, for their third win in six outings.

The scores:

Third Game (Srs)

ATENEO 67—Intal 20, Bugia 8, Membrere 8, Tenorio 8, Tiu 7, Del Rosario 7, Arao 4, Kramer 3, Escalona 2, Aguilar 0, Uichico 0, Quimson 0.

NU 56—Fernandez 15, Miclat 14, Estolano 7, Balijon 4, Malcontento 3, Malagueno 3, Mendoza 2, Moradas 2, D. Catamora 2, King 2, Asoro 2, Mollena 0, C. Catamora 0.

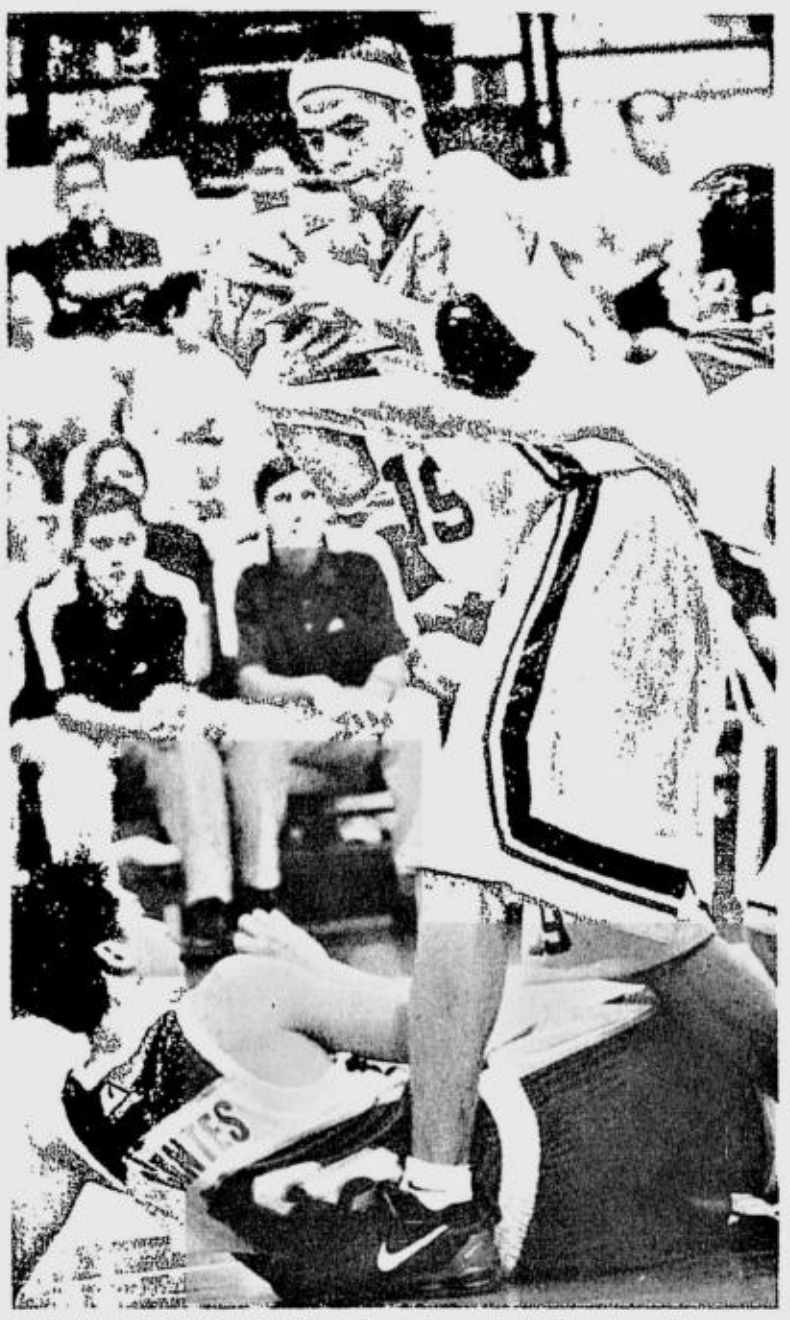
Quarters: 16-18, 33-33, 49-4167-56.

Fourth Game (Srs)

FEU 63—Isip 19, Miranda 16, Santos 10, Rizada 8, Chan 5, Mangahas 2, Garcia 2, Yabut 1, Villanueva 0, Santiago 0, Flores 0, Dela Cruz 0, Barcellano 0, Babilonia 0.

UP 56—Cervantes 15, Santos 14, Almeda 12, David 8, Ibañes 5, Quebral 2, Bienvenida 0, Buyco 0, Epres 0, Ferrer 0.

Quarters: 14-13, 32-24, 50-40, 63-56.


ARWIND SANTOS of FEU battles to keep the ball against Toti Almeda and Josant Cervantes of UP. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Bibat has virtual lock on last Putra golf slot

WITH his main rivals struggling, Michael Bibat closed in on the fourth and last Putra Cup berth yesterday as he pulled away despite a 77 with one round left in the four-day qualifier at the Langer course of the Riviera course in Silang, Cavite.

After shooting rounds of 72 and 75, Bibat floundered at the par-71 hazard-laden layout with nines of 39-38 but increased his lead from three to eight as Southwoods teammate Gene Bondoc shot himself in the foot with an 84.

That enabled Boyet Zaragosa of Canlubang and former national amateur champion Artemio Murakami to assume the challengers' role, although they seemed to be too far behind with 232s.

Zaragoza had a 78 while Murakami fired a 75.

RP pitcher hurt as Koreans prevail

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINES picked up its first run but ended its 30th Asia-Pacific Zone Pony baseball stint yesterday with another loss and another pitcher injured.

Reynaldo Calma was hit in the shin during a hitting rampage in the third frame by South Korea, which won, 13-1, in five innings to book third place in the four-team field at the Rizal diamond.

Calma is the second RP pitcher to be rushed to the hospital after Juan Kristopier Angeles suffered a broken jaw in the Filipinos' opening assignment Tuesday against the Japanese.

In a solid display of teammanship, the RP boys on Wednesday donated their lunch money of P100 each for the surgery of Angeles, whose left jaw was severely fractured.

The Filipinos played defending champion Chinese-Taipei without a midday meal on Wednesday as Angeles reportedly needs at least P30,000 for his operation scheduled tomorrow.

Taiwan routed Japan, 8-2, in the first game. The championship is set at 10 a.m. today.

The Koreans scored 10 runs in the first three innings before second baseman Christopher Lleva drove in the only run for the Filipinos in the third.

The Filipinos had the chance to extend the match into the full seven innings after singles by Ram Casey Alipio and Jonathan Devis.

But Korean reliever Seo Su-won shut the door on the Philippines by striking out Jose Bernardo Castro for the third out.

SPORTSWATCH

Paragua boosts bid; Gonzales shares top

FILIPINO International Master Mark Paragua beat Woman Fide Master Darja Kaps of Slovakia in the third round Wednesday night to share 6th to 14th places in the XI Nice International Open Chess Tournament at the Grand Aston Hotel in Nice, France. Paragua, the country's top-ranked player, now has 2.5 points to tie compatriot IM Ronald Bancod, GM Nenad Sulava and IM Milan MRDJA of Croatia, IM Vladimir Kostic of Yugoslavia, Jan Joris Groenewold of the Netherlands, Mats Orndahl of Sweden, Alexis Hab and Jean Philippe Serre of France. Bancod, who upset Grandmaster Miroljub Lazic of Yugoslavia in the second round, settled for a draw with IM MRDJA in the third round. IM Yves Rañola bowed to defending champion GM Davor Komljenovic of Croatia while National Master Rolando Nolte yielded to GM Sulava. GM Kolmjenovic leads with a perfect 3.0 points, towing along IM Aurelien Dunis and Camilie Lamorelle of France, IM Namig Gouliev of Azerbaijan and Markus Orndahl of Sweden. Rañola was stuck at 2.0 points in the company of Filipino NM candidate Roland Salvador, who took the measure of Mario Berutti of Italy. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Milo Olongapo leg kicks off Sunday

RACE organizers will have their hands full in the Olongapo City leg of the 28th National Milo Marathon on Sunday. Mayor James Gordon will fire the starting gun promptly at 6 a.m. in front of the Olongapo City Hall. Vice Mayor Rolen Paulino, Milo marathon local organizer, said he expects new faces from the 11,000 runners to emerge as winners in this Sunday's race as defending champion Mamerto Corpuz already qualified in Manila while Hazel Madamba's participation is now doubtful because of her current residence status. The top three finishers in the 21-K elimination race will advance to the National Finals on Nov. 14 in Metro Manila. The champions in the men's and women's divisions will also bring home an elegant trophy, a P10,000 cash prize and a brand-new Globe handyphone. Bayview Park Hotel, Cebu Pacific, adidas, Globe Handyphone, and the Department of Tourism are supporting the 28th elimination run, which is now on its sixth leg.

Rotary golf deadline today

INTERESTED participants to the Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines (RGFFP) golf tournament scheduled Aug. 11-13 have until today to pay the registration fee of P3,500. The tournament will be held at the Cebu Country Club and Alta Vista Golf & Country Club in Cebu City. RGFFP executive vice president/chief operating officer Albert Que said the fee includes air fare and hotel reservations, two rounds of golf, four cocktail/dinner events, raffle items and prizes. A higher fee of P4,500 will be imposed on late registrants. New entries RC Lipa South, RC Jaro, Iloilo City, RC Diliman, RC Greenmeadows, RC Bulacan and RC Davao have signed up with Rotary Club Cebu Port Center for the event backed by Pagcor, Smart, Air Philippines, Petron, GNC, PLDT, Orchard Golf & Country Club, Hotel Copacabana, Integrated Pipe Specialist, Enriquez Security and Services, Unionbank and Tanduay-Asia Brewery. For more information call 7218896 and 7210564, fax 7218896 and 7215940, or e-mail rgffp1987@yahoo.com or meriyah@yahoo.com. Those in Visayas and Mindanao may call 0324226753 or e-mail fe_escano03@yahoo.com or fe_escano@hotmail.com.

Academia keeps slim kart lead

POINTS leader Roman Academia won the first two heats of the third leg of the Tuason Racing School-Philippine International Karting Association Kids Cadet Series but faltered to third in the final during a torrid racing weekend held recently at the Enchanted Kingdom. Juha Turralba, second in the points standing heading into the race weekend, topped the final race in the series organized by TRS, sanctioned by Pika, and sponsored by CTK, BMW Prestige, Active Group, Bingo Bonanza, Chikka Asia, Standard Insurance, Channel Technology, Coca-Cola, Siemens, FMIDC, Bestex Okaya Phils., and DPC Yellow Pages. Kahlil Demaisip was the surprise of the third leg of the Kids Cadet series coming in second to Turralba in the final race. Academia still leads in the overall standings with 124 points, with Turralba closing the gap at 116. The series continues on Aug. 28 and 29 at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Simon shoots down Air Force

AIR 21 rode on Biboy Simon's hot shooting Wednesday to beat Philippine Air Force, 100-90, in the 7th Danny Espiritu Cup basketball tournament at the PAF gym in Villamor. Simon finished with 42 points as he led Air 21 to a 58-47 halftime spread over the Airmen, who lost for the first time in three games. San Sebastian College-Cavite whipped PATTS, 87-85, to wrest solo leadership at 3-0, while Rizal Technological University subdued BF Law, 108-103, in the other games of the tourney organized by NBDL founder Ted Magno. RTU faces Balfour Beatty at 6 p.m. today at the EAC gym while PATTS takes on Homer Cagers at 7:30.

Pasay derby sets 58 fights

Members of the National Cockers Association (NCA) and United Cockers Association of the Philippines (Ucap) compete in a 4-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Pasay City cockpit starting at 7 p.m. The 58-fight program is sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Complexor 3000 and Sagupaan Mite Free. At stake is a whopping cash prize of P300,000. Entry fee and minimum bet are P10,000 and P5,500, respectively. Blandy Tolentino, a veteran cocker-breeder from San Pablo, Laguna, will host tonight's event. Meanwhile, PCC pit managers Oca Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano announced the staging of another 3-cock event on Aug. 13. For other inquiries, call 8431890, 8431746 and 8166750.

'Beat Pagulayan' on Aug. 29-31

BIG-TIME billiards benefactor Puyat Sports and television network ABS-CBN will be joining forces to host a blockbuster tournament featuring newly crowned World Pool champion Fil-Canadian Alex Pagulayan and handpicked hotshots from the United States, Europe and Asia, including the Philippines, on Aug. 29-31.

My sources at the Games and Amusement Board said eight foreign pool pros and an equal number of Filipino players will be seeing action in the three-day series, confirming my exclusive story (PDI, July 23) that former world champions Johnny Archer of the US, Mika Immonen of Finland, Thorsten Hohmann of Germany and Chao Fong-pang of Taiwan want to play here and beat Pagulayan, aiming to regain prestige after losing in the World Pool Championship in Taipei.

"We are organizing this event in response to the public clamor to stage another billiards spectacle that will showcase the pool savvy of the best players in the world," said Puyat Sports top man and noted sports patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat. "This is our gift to our countrymen, *tuluy-tuloy na ito*."

Last year, Puyat Sports and ABS-CBN jointly organized the well-attended "On Cue 1 and 2: Battle of Champions" won by Immonen and Archer, respectively, at the Robinsons Galleria. Through the years starting in the late 1980s, Putch and his elder brother, Jose "Popit" Puyat, have been hosting several successful international campaigns of the star-studded Puyat Sports Team headed by the fabled Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante. Not only that. The Puyats also have not touched a single centavo from the earnings of their players since they took them under their wings. They are indeed one in a million.

At present, the Puyat brothers are keen on staging a year-ending Philippine World Invitational 9-Ball Tournament patterned after the World Pool Championship. But they are still scouting for the needed support to realize this costly project.

In my opinion, the ideal backers of this billiards blockbuster are government

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

agencies such as the Department of Tourism, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the private sector led by true and tested sports patrons like San Miguel Corp. big boss Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, Red Bull team owner George Chua of Photokina Marketing Corp., popular horse owner Hermie Esguerra of the Herma Group of Companies and TV giant ABS-CBN, among others.

For the "Beat Alex Pagulayan" series, some other leading pros like reigning US Open champion Jeremy Jones, Rodney Morris and players from Taiwan and Japan also want to come here and take on Pagulayan and their Filipino rivals led by Reyes, the 1999 World Pool champion; Bustamante, the 2002 World Pool runner-up; Lee Van Corteza, Marlon Manalo, Dennis Orcullo, Rodolfo Luat, Warren Kiamco and Leonardo Andam.

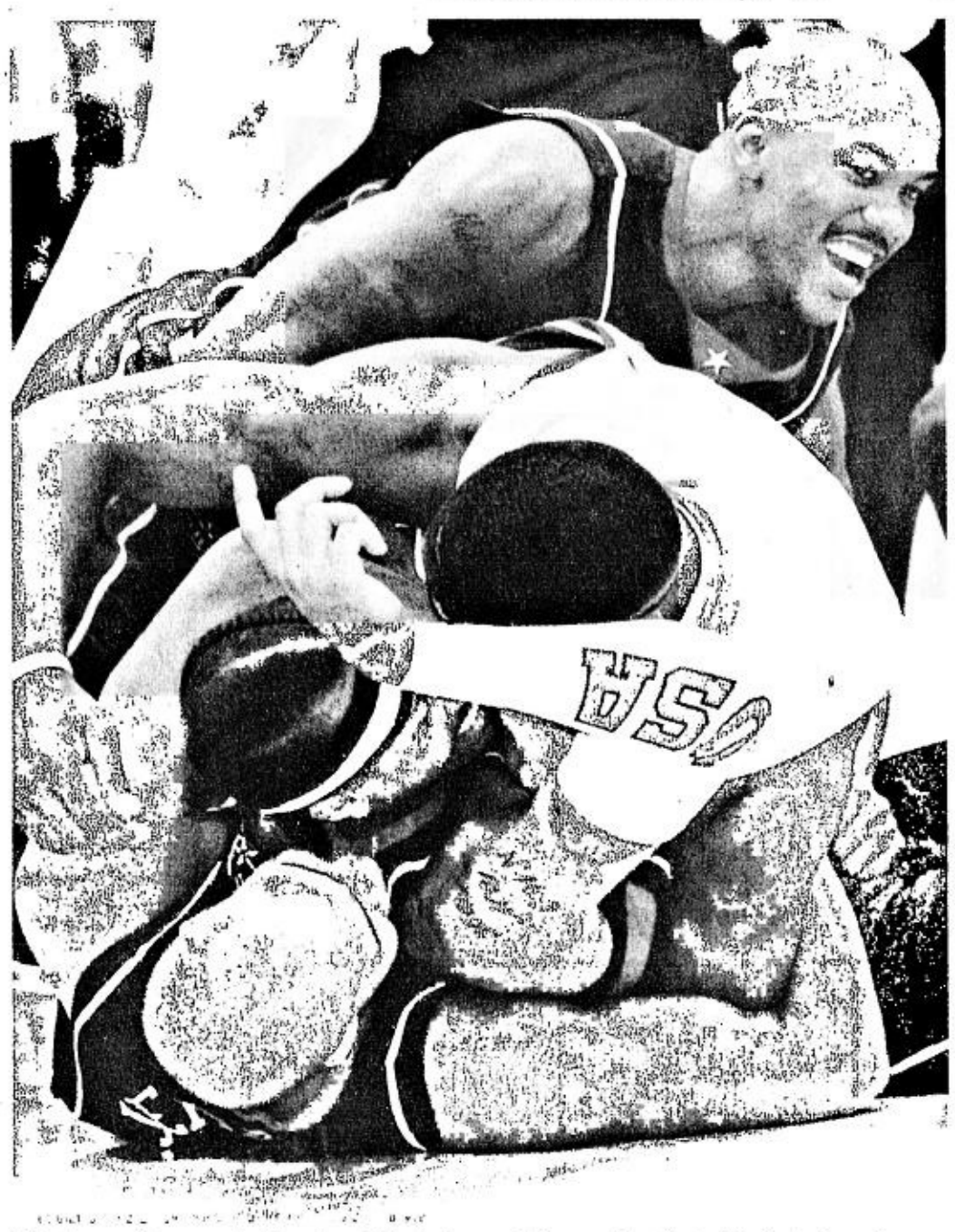
This forthcoming tournament is a shot in the arm because it will not only promote the Philippines as the emerging billiards capital of the world, but it will also make many Filipinos happy, especially those who are trembling as a result of the prevailing political and economic hard times.

***

POTPOURRI. Here's a toast to my colleagues in WHIP (Writers of Horseracing in the Philippines) on their initial racing presentation tomorrow afternoon at the Santa Ana Park. For starters, the country's very best horses such as Cutting Edge of Putch Puyat, president of the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners, and Hellfire owned by 2003 top money earner Hermie Esguerra of Wind Blown fame, are among the nominated entries. The others are Adam's Call, Staunch Ally, District Three, Propensity, Lord of All, Cossane, Speed Machine, Silver Rose, Diktador, San Diego Force, You Know That, Winter's Fury, All for Glory, Bull Rider, Perfect Storm, Honoris Causa and Wear the Fox Hat . . . Red Bull head coach Yeng Guiao will field an intact lineup in the season-opening All-Filipino tournament of the PBA.

Except for Nelson Asaytono, the Photokina franchise will bank on old reliables Davonn Harp, Junthy Valenzuela, Enrico Villanueva, Mick Pennisi, Lordy Tugade, Homer Se, Cyrus Baguio and Topex Robinson. Point guard Denver Lopez is on the injured list while Jimwell Torion is serving a suspension . . . Thousands of disgruntled commuters and owners of business establishments around the area are losing their patience over the daily monstrous traffic jams along MacArthur Highway fronting the Vitarich compound in Abangan Sur, Marilao, Bulacan. They are appealing to Bulacan Gov. Josie de la Cruz and Marilao Mayor Peping Guillermo to prod the contractors to hurry up and finish the long-delayed project.

Iverson rescues US with midcourt shot



US players pile up on the floor to celebrate Iverson's buzzer-beating triple that allowed the Americans to narrowly escape a second straight loss. AP

COLOGNE, Germany—Allen Iverson came through on both ends of the court Wednesday for the struggling Americans, stopping a second straight loss heading into the Olympics.

The 2001 NBA MVP hit the first buzzer-beater of his career from just across midcourt as the Americans edged Germany, 80-77, in an exhibition match.

"I knew I had to take a few dribbles, then I got around my man," Iverson said. "That felt great. It felt good because it was the first time in my life I hit a buzzer beater like that."

Iverson not only sank two clutch 3-pointers in the final 80 seconds, he set the tone for the start for a team ripped for some pitiful defense in a stunning 95-78 rout by Italy a night earlier.

In the opening minutes, he knocked the ball loose after pressuring German guard Steffen Hamann, then caught up with the fast break to finish with a layup.

"Allen was great—he's getting better," said US coach Larry Brown.

Iverson's performance was good news for Brown, who needs to rely on his co-captain as the Americans chase a fourth straight gold medal at the Olympics, which start Aug. 13.

The 76ers guard, two-time MVP Tim Duncan and Richard Jefferson are the only players back from the team that qualified for the Olympics last year. Otherwise, Brown has to shape up the youngest team the United States has ever sent to the Olympics since the pros were allowed.

"We made a lot of improvements over the game last night, but we have a long way to go," Brown said, adding of his recipe for gold in Athens: "We're going to have pound the ball into Tim Duncan and knock down some outside shots."

But the shaky first two games of a European road trip has people wondering if this team is going to be the first to get beaten at the Olympics since the NBA players were allowed on the courts at the 1992 games.

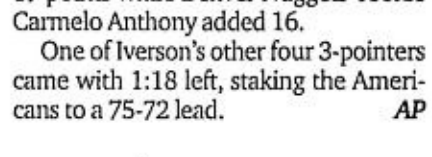
Germany's best player, Dallas Mavericks' star Dirk Nowitzki, was among the skeptics.

"If they sent Kevin Garnett and Kobe and everyone else no one in the world would have a chance. But I don't know like this," he said. "I'll be very curious to see how they'll do in Athens."

Nowitzki led all scorers with 32 points and appeared to have sent the game to overtime by launching a 3-pointer over two defenders to tie the score at 77 with 3.2 seconds left.

That's when Iverson came through with his buzzer-beater, finishing with 15 points. Duncan led the Americans with 19 points while Denver Nuggets' rookie Carmelo Anthony added 16.

One of Iverson's other four 3-pointers came with 1:18 left, staking the Americans to a 75-72 lead. *AP*



NOWITZKI: Unstoppable AP

GMA wishes RP bets all the best

From page A25

Figueroa of archery and Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito of track and field.

The other members of the delegation are boxers Chris Camat, Harry Tañamor, Violito Payla and Romeo Brin, swimmers Miguel Molina, Miguel Mendoza, J.B. Walsh and Jaclyn Pangilinan, and marathon man Eduardo Buenavista.

The affair lasted only 15 minutes and the Chief Executive wasted no time underscoring the importance of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, which will be held in the country.

"This is the next thing we have to attend to," said Ms Arroyo referring to the country's third hosting of the Games. "After the Olympics, we have to start moving to ensure the SEA Games' success."

The President has also ordered Tourism Secretary Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan to represent her in Athens and gain pointers for next year's SEAG where he is the chair of the organizing committee.

Pagdanganan said he would also promote during the Olympics the tourism program of the country which expects some five million foreign visitors from now until the SEA Games in November next year.

"President Arroyo wants to let the Filipino athletes know that they will not be alone during the competition. The President and the whole nation will be at the sidelines rooting for them," said Pagdanganan, who will be the highest government official in the Philippine delegation.

Nicdao leads Spring past Iloilo

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—Ex-pro Christian Nicdao scattered eight of his 20 points in the fourth quarter to lead Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna Spring past the Iloilo Warriors, 79-70, Wednesday in the crossover phase of the NBC (National Basketball Conference) national championship at the RECS Complex here.

The surging Spring of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro pulled away from a scary 56-54 edge at the start of the final period on Nicdao's back-to-back baskets.

Mike Garcia, Nani Epondulan and Nicdao then launched a 16-8 tear to seal Spring's fourth win in six games in the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Spring Cooking Oil, PCSO, Cebu Ferries, Air Philippines, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Supercat, Accel and Molten.

The visiting Warriors, backed by the Robert Uy-led Iloilo Basketball League, sustained their fourth loss in nine games.

"We're now gaining momentum," said Spring playing coach Mike Buendia.

Nicdao shot 9-for-12 from the floor, grabbed 13 rebounds and had two assists in a sparkling performance.

The Warriors wind up their northern swing by playing the Baguio Cardinals at 5:30 p.m. today at the UB gym in Baguio City.

The Scores:

LAGUNA 79—Nicdao 20, Capobres 15, Manuel 13, Epondulan 10, Kalaw 7, Serrano 5, Reyes 3, Mendoza 2, Garcia 2, Corbin 2.

ILOILO 70—Sinco 19, Marucot 9, Sayon 8, Leonida 7, Senerez 3, Allado 2, Bracamonte 2, Moreno 2, Sencil 1, Poral 0.

Quarters: 19-18, 37-32, 56-54, 79-70.

Agassi proves 18-year career far from over

CINCINNATI—Andre Agassi continued to confound those who believe his 18-year career is almost over, by beating former Australian Open champion Thomas Johansson to reach the last 16 of the Masters Series on Wednesday.

The American showed a fair deal of patience to register a 6-1, 3-6, 6-1 success in a match completed close to midnight after an hour-long rain delay and two further interruptions once the contest was under way.

"You get more experienced at not getting overly concerned about things you can't control," the 34-year-old said.

In the same half of the draw, defending champion Andy Roddick beat Germany's Nicolas Kiefer for the third time in ten days. Halfway through the second set of his 6-4, 6-4 defeat, Kiefer launched a vicious slash at the net with his racket that gave Roddick a psychological boost.

The second-seeded American next plays Paradorn Srichaphan, the 15th seed from Thailand, a 6-3, 6-4 winner over Sjeng Schalken.

Earlier, Lleyton Hewitt defeated former world No. 1 Gustavo Kuerten, 6-3, 6-4. *Reuters*

THINGS are looking up for Agassi. AP

Bryant accuser may file civil charge instead

DENVER—The woman who accused Kobe Bryant of rape will have to discuss with prosecutors whether she will go ahead with the criminal case because she fears the release of court documents about her sex life threatens her chance of getting a fair hearing, one of her lawyers said Wednesday.

John Clune said his 20-year-old client will have to talk to prosecutors soon about that and will also consider whether to file a civil suit against the NBA star.

A criminal case requires a higher standard of proof to convict—beyond a reasonable doubt—and punishment can involve a prison sentence. In this case, Bryant faces four years to life in prison or 20 years to life on probation, and a fine up to $750,000.

In a civil case, a slightly lower standard of proof is required to convict—a preponderance of evidence—and punishment is usually a monetary award. *AP*

Hot debut by Generals

HOST Emilio Aguinaldo College overpowered favored De La Salle Dasmariñas, 85-72, yesterday at the start of the 3rd Universities and Colleges Athletic Association (UCAA) basketball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

The Generals, showing they are a force to reckon with in the eight-team tournament backed by Molten and Mikasa balls, jumped off to an early double digit lead en route to the surprisingly easy victory over the Patriots.

The underrated Generals erected their biggest lead at 72-57 on a 7-2 bomb ignited by Nino Songco's layup. Songco topscored for EAC with 19 points on top of 10 rebounds.

Sharapova leads Russian charge in Rogers Cup

MONTREAL—Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova overcame some spotty serving and beat Kristina Brandi of Puerto Rico, 6-1, 6-4, in her opening match at the Rogers Cup.

On Wednesday, a day in which Russian players were featured on center court, the largest crowd of the week turned out to see the 17-year-old Sharapova.

"It was a little bit up and down," she said.

"I never expect to play my best tennis in my first match, but I did everything I had to do to win."

The sixth-seeded Sharapova advanced to a third-round meeting Thursday with another of the many Russian players making their mark on the WTA Tour these days—Vera Zvonareva, a straight-sets winner over Bethanie Mattek.

"She's very tough, very hungry," said Sharapova, who has split two previous meetings with Zvonareva, the 10th seed.

French Open champion and third-seeded Anastasia Myskina, playing with a sore leg, advanced with a 6-0, 6-4 victory over Arantxa Parra Santonja.

"I pulled a muscle, but I'll be OK," said Myskina, who will next face 15-seeded Chanda Rubin.

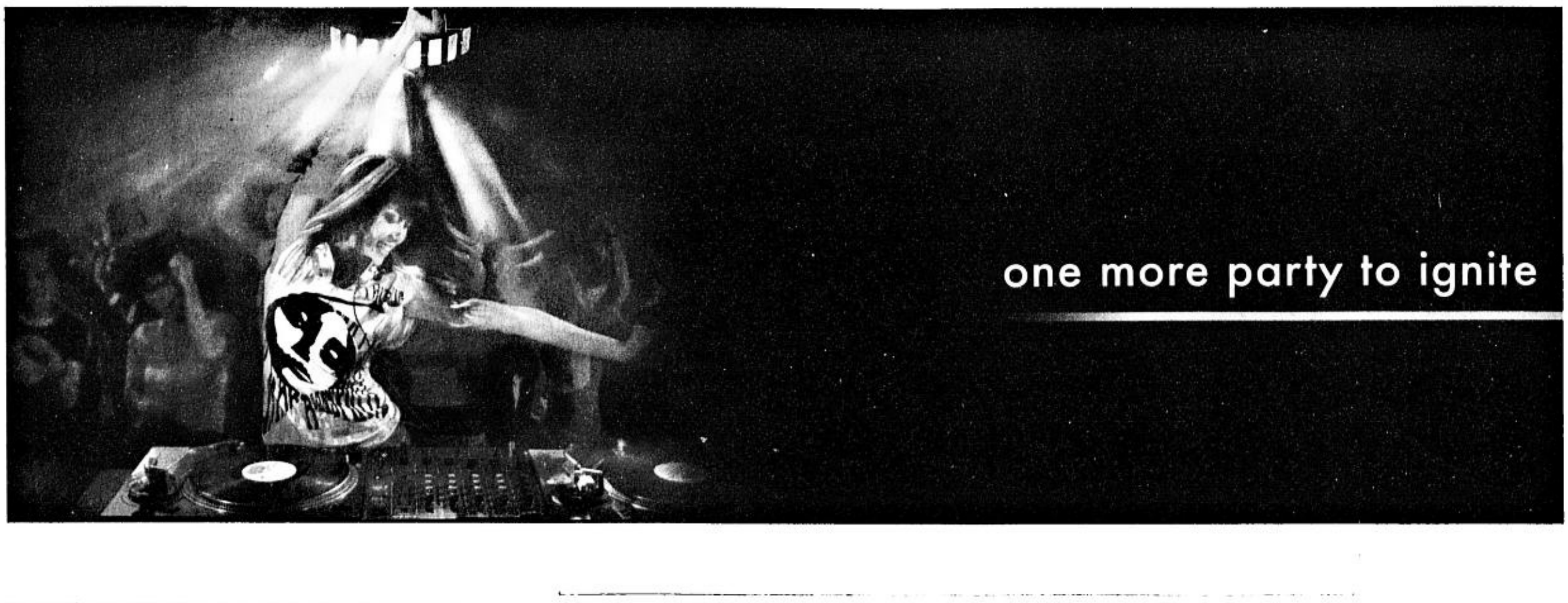
Fourth-seeded Elena Dementieva was upset, 6-1, 6-4, by Gisela Dulko of Argentina while eighth-seeded Nadia Petrova was beaten, 6-4, 6-7 (6-8), 7-5, by Russian compatriot Elena Likhovtseva.

Dulko, a 19-year old WTA Tour rookie, added to her impressive string of upset victories.

"I played well from the baseline and served pretty well," she said.

"That was the key to match. She's the best ranked player I've ever beat, so yeah, it's one of the best wins of my career."

Dulko beat 47-year-old former world No. 1 Martina Navratilova at both the French Open and Wimbledon this year and also defeated Jelena Dokic at the All-England club. *AP*



Trumpets weekend workshops

TRUMPETS Playshop's all-new round of weekend workshops begins on Saturday, Aug. 7, and goes on until Nov. 27.

Now on its 11th year, Playshop discovers new performing talents and sharpens their skills in a fun, encouraging environment. Its year-round program is designed to fit into the student's tight school or work schedule. Students and working professionals can learn how to build confidence and stage presence, as well as improve their skills in voice, dance, and the theater arts under the guidance of some of the country's best performing arts teachers.

Classes offered are Children's Theater (3-6 years old) and Children's Musical Theater (7-12 years old).

Older students can take Musical Theater for Teens and Adults (13 years old and above), which combines all the elements of acting, music and storytelling.

Streetdancing continues to be the dance of choice among young people, and classes are now open to enthusiasts 7 years old and above, with the Maneouvres showing them the right moves.

Trumpets' Musicademy holds one-on-one voice lessons all week long, on a 12-session schedule basis, for intensive training in vocal and singing techniques.

Playshop also has a new, five-week course on Public Speaking and Hosting for Professionals, facilitated by events host, teacher, and award-winning writer-director Freddie Santos.

Classes begin Aug. 7. Enrollment is until Aug. 14. Call 636-2842 or 633-5010.

SHOW TIME

CADIO
All Saturdays of August, e's Bar at the Edsa Shangri-la Manila features pop-jazz singer Cadio, who gives his swing and jazz arrangements to Sinatra, Bennet, hits from the '70s and '80s and other classics. Showtime is 9 p.m. No cover charge.

4 of 8 films...

From page A32

left no room for the sex-comedy "Bikini Open," produced by Seiko Films and directed by Jeturian, who also directed the glossy and sexy "Bridal Shower" in last year's film festival. "Bridal Shower" had an R-13 rating.

Complaints about R-18

In a phone interview yesterday, SM Cinemas' Butch Ibañez told INQUIRER Entertainment that they stopped showing R-18 movies as "part of SM's upgrading of its image."

"It's not just sexy or bold films but also violent and extremely gory movies," Ibañez explained. "If we're showing an R-18 movie, we have to make sure it's worth taking the risk.

"Right now, we still have 'Liberated 2,' which has been running for two weeks now. We are fulfilling our commitment to the producer. But starting today, we've veered away from R-18 movies. We'll stop with R-13 movies."

He said the owners of SM have been getting complaints about the showing of R-18 movies in the theater malls.

"It has become a concern of the owners," he said. "The local movie industry has been declining for the past few years that the big three—Viva, Regal and Star Cinema—have lesser output. But producers of bold films now outnumber their output. Almost every week, we have a bold movie opening."

SM malls have a total of 84 screens in Metro Manila. The gross of movies showing in SM is usually a gauge of how well or how bad a movie fares in the local box office.

SM CINEMA
NOW SHOWING

Central

SM MEGAMALL 6331901

1	KING ARTHUR
2	THE ALAMO
3	COLLATERAL
4	I, ROBOT
5	ELLA ENCHANTED
6	SPIDERMAN 2
7	DEAD PEOPLE
8	IMELDA
9	GARFIELD
10	CATWOMAN
11	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
12	ETERNAL SUNSHINE...

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1	IMELDA
2	LIBERATED 2
3	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
4	COLLATERAL
5	I, ROBOT
6	CATWOMAN
7	DEAD PEOPLE
8	GARFIELD
9	ELLA ENCHANTED
10	KING ARTHUR
11	SPIDERMAN 2
12	ETERNAL SUNSHINE....

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	I, ROBOT
2	COLLATERAL
3	ETERNAL SUNSHINE...
4	GARFIELD
5	THE ALAMO
6	COLLATERAL
7	IMELDA
8	ALONG CAME POLLY
9	CATWOMAN
10	LIBERATED 2
11	DEAD PEOPLE
12	ELLA ENCHANTED

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1	I, ROBOT
2	ELLA ENCHANTED
3	DEAD PEOPLE
4	KING ARTHUR
5	GARFIELD
6	ETERNAL SUNSHINE...
7	CATWOMAN
8	COLLATERAL

SM CITY STA. MESA 7149522 • 7151416

1	I, ROBOT
2	ETERNAL SUNSHINE...
3	GARFIELD
4	IMELDA
5	COLLATERAL
6	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
7	CATWOMAN
8	KING ARTHUR
9	ELLA ENCHANTED
10	DEAD PEOPLE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN 2514302

1	GARFIELD
2	CATWOMAN
3	DEAD PEOPLE
4	I, ROBOT

North

SM CITY MARILAO (044) 933 2013 to 17

1	I, ROBOT
2	ELLA ENCHANTED
3	WEREWOLF (GINGERSNAPS 2)
4	CATWOMAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA 7128815

1	CATWOMAN
2	GARFIELD
3	I, ROBOT
4	WEREWOLF (GINGERSNAPS 2)
5	ELLA ENCHANTED
6	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 4464505

1	CATWOMAN
2	ELLA ENCHANTED
3	PRINCE & ME
4	COLLATERAL

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS 8066888

1	ETERNAL SUNSHINE
2	ELLA ENCHANTED
3	GARFIELD THE MOVIE
4	DEAD PEOPLE
5	AROUND THE WORLD
6	KING ARTHUR
7	CATWOMAN
8	COLLATERAL
9	I, ROBOT
10	IMELDA

SM CITY BICUTAN 7763055

1	COLLATERAL
2	GARFIELD
3	CATWOMAN
4	I, ROBOT

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT 8294975

1	GARFIELD
2	I, ROBOT
3	CATWOMAN
4	DEAD PEOPLE

SM CITY BACOOR (046)4173868

1	WEREWOLF (GINGERSNAPS 2)
2	ETERNAL SUNSHINE
3	CATWOMAN
4	ELLA ENCHANTED
5	GARFIELD
6	I, ROBOT
7	BEAUTIFUL LIFE
8	KING ARTHUR

SM CITY DASMA (046) 4323201-04

1	around the world in 80 days
2	GARFIELD
3	COLLATERAL
4	CATWOMAN

SM CITY LUCENA (042) 7108977-80

1	CATWOMAN
2	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
3	MEAN GIRLS
4	KING ARTHUR

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU (032) 2313876

1	I, ROBOT
2	KING ARTHUR
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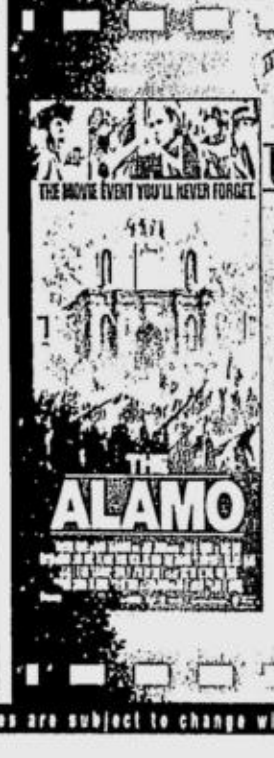

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Lani to perform in Las Vegas for 6 months

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—"No, not at all," Lani Misalucha replied when INQUIRER Entertainment asked her at a recent press conference here if she regrets her decision to abandon her career in the Philippines and move with her family to the US.

SHOW TIME

Misalucha spoke to the Fil-Am media at a gathering to announce that she and the Society of Seven (SOS), a veteran show band from Hawaii, have landed a six-month contract to perform at Bally's Las Vegas beginning this Saturday, Aug. 7. The show's publicists are declaring that with her gig at the 1,160-seat Jubilee! Theater, Misalucha becomes "the first Filipino artist originating from the Philippines to headline a main showroom in a major Las Vegas strip hotel-casino for six months."

Misalucha added, "My manager here has so many plans for me. I have an upcoming album. I have a tour. So I don't regret leaving the Philippines."

About her Las Vegas stint, in which she will sing with the SOS at the Jubilee! Theater daily except Friday, she gushed, "Honestly, this is something that I've never dreamed of. I never thought that this would happen to me and that I'm going to be there singing for six months. This is something that I've never planned. Never, never, never."

Misalucha, labeled in Manila as "Asia's nightingale," and the SOS will be performing as one act. SOS includes Gary Bautista, who also had a flourishing career as a singer and impressionist in Manila before moving to Hawaii.

SOS co-founder and member Tony Ruivivar explained, "We are pooling our talents together. We have a good chance of competing with the other great talents who are in Las Vegas. Never in our entire career did we think that we were going to have a woman in the group because I do a lot of numbers as a woman (laughs), and so does Gary. But when we heard Lani sing, we said, this is it. She is the best I've ever heard. She also has a great personality. She's very down to earth."

SOS manager Larry Harrison added, "I brought one of the top writers of the Las Vegas Sun to watch a preview. He said, my God this is unbelievable. He stood up and gave a standing ovation. Society of Seven is exciting on its own. They can put on a show that's unbelievable. With Lani, it's going to be even better."

The other members of the SOS, which is a regular act on the Strip, are Randy Abellar, Roy Guerzo, Wayne Wakai, Hoku Low and Bert Sagum.

Misalucha and SOS' revue of music and comedy routines goes on at 3 p.m. "Jubilee!," the long-running spectacle of occasionally topless showgirls, is the evening attraction at the theater.

Sustaining an afternoon show for several months in Las Vegas is a challenge, so if the revue by the act jokingly referred to as the Society of Eight (including Misalucha) is a success, the trailblazing Filipino-American producers, marketing and advertising people deserve as much credit as the performers.

The show is produced by Rosy Cheeks Entertainment Group Inc., composed of Mendrei and Cecile Leelin, Noli Misalucha and Edwin and Lani Raquel, at whose LA mansion the press conference was held. Former Manila writer Jackie Y. Regala handles the marketing and promotions. Her husband Gerry A. Katigbak is in charge of advertising.

"SOCIETY OF EIGHT." Lani says she has no regrets about leaving her career in Manila.
JANET SUSAN R. NEPALES

Hot Dish nights

TUESDAY, Aug. 10, all the Viva Hot Babes unite for a night of fun, games and musical numbers in "Hot Stuff 2/Kikay Night" at Dish QC at the ABS Compound.

All Mondays of August are retro nights at Dish with Rockin' Revival on Aug. 9 and 23, while the irrepressible band of doctors and dentists, the 8 Track, takes the stage on Aug. 16 and 30.

Hyperbeat performs on all Tuesdays. Wednesdays are special treats, with Jimmy Bondoc on Aug. 11 and 25, and Nina with Elements on Aug. 18.

Thursdays have Paolo Santos and Take One performing on Aug. 19 and 26. K-Lite extends the acoustic theme on Aug. 12 with Passage.

Fridays are mixed-bag nights. On Aug. 13, the Flintstones and Boyfriends share the stage. On Aug. 20, it's two Hunks and their bands when Bisqit, the alternative rock band of Bernard Palanca, returns, double-billed with Diether Ocampo's Blow. And on Aug. 27, it's Flintstones and the Akafellas.

Saturdays feature Wings Soriano and the R & B grooves of K24/7 on Aug. 14, 21 and 28; while it's '80s flashback-time with the Rage and K24/7 on Aug. 7.

Call 413-0603 or 413-0609 for details.

'Pals for A.L.S'

"PALS for A.L.S." is an all-star musical celebration of hope for Edelmundo Dipasupil, a doctor stricken with the dreadful Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) at age 42.

The benefit show, which also aims to increase awareness of ALS, will feature Isay Alvarez, Robert Seña, The Tux, Opera, The Company, Vernie Varga, Jay Cayuca, John Lesaca, Whiplash Dancers, with emcee Dan Andrews and Mara Seguerra. It is directed by Freddie Santos.

The show is slated on Aug. 20 at James Reuter Theater, St. Paul's College, Quezon City, starting at 7 p.m.

RODJUN (inset) joins Mico, John Wayne, Mhyco, Rayver, Sergio and Emman.

Animé plus 1

SINCE it was launched last year as part of ABS-CBN Star Magic's (Talent Center) Batch 11, the group Animé has been slowly but surely making a name for itself in show business.

Animé is composed of the talented, good-looking Mico Aytona, John Wayne Sace, Mhyco Aquino, Rayver Cruz, Sergio Garcia and Emman Abeleda.

This year, the Animé welcomes to the group Rodjun Cruz, Rayver's elder brother.

Catch the Animé every Sunday in the "Full Circle" segment of "Asap Mania" on ABS-CBN and see for yourself why people, including Gary Valenciano, has been raving about the young group.

The Animé is part of Gary's concert "Thankful" at the Araneta Coliseum tonight.

'Night of Champions' in South

"NIGHT of Champions," starring Sarah Geronimo, Rachel Ann Go and Erik Santos, and mounted by Viva Concert and Events, will be at the La Salle Coliseum in Bacolod City today and at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City tomorrow.

Sarah is the grand prize winner of "Star for a Night," Rachel of "Search for a Star," and Eric of "Star in a Million." "Night of Champions" also features Mark Bautista, Raymond Manalo, Christian Bautista, and Star Circle Quest's Sandara Park and Hero Angeles.

It will also have a repeat at the Araneta Coliseum on Aug. 13. Tickets to the repeat are available at SM Ticketnet outlets, Araneta box office and Viva Concerts.

Stage director is Bong Quintana. Musical director is Marc Lopez. The show is sponsored by Jollibee, PLDT, Nestle Sundae, Pepsi, Skechers, Myx, the Philippine Star, People's Tonight, Popstar Salon, Swatch Shoes and Styletto.

'Ala Eh Ogie' in Batangas City

OGIE Alcasid kicks off his birthday month with the concert "Ala Eh Gabi ni Ogie" tomorrow night at the Batangas Sports Complex. The show is produced by the Taal-Church Historical and Authentic Restoration Movement Foundation Inc. (Taal-Charms).

Batangas City is very close to the singer's heart. "My mom is from Taal and as a kid, I used to spend my summer vacation in my grandmother's house," he says. "I also got married in Taal."

Presented by Whisper, Smart and A.C. Mojares, "Ala Eh Gabi ni Ogie" is one of the many fundraising projects of Taal-Charms. Proceeds of the show will go to the restoration of the 150-year-old Basilica of San Martin de Tours. Located in the heart of Taal, the basilica was built by Fr. Diego Espina in 1575. Said to be the biggest church in East Asia, it is slowly deteriorating and needs a major renovation.

"Ala Eh Gabi ni Ogie" is sponsored by Nestle, Jollibee P. Burgos, the provincial government of Batangas, Hotel Pontefino and Vitapure. Special guest is Regine Velasquez. For tickets, call 633-2095 or 634-6913.

LIVE MORE

It used to be that food, clothing and shelter were the barest necessities in order to survive. These days though, with the advent of gourmet food, designer clothing and avant-garde architecture, people need so much more to sustain their active, busy lifestyles.

Nowadays, it's not unusual to hear of people leading double lives – a lawyer/doctor, a banker moonlighting as a tri-athlete or an executive-by-day, rocker-by-night.

This work-hard-play-hard existence has but one goal – to LIVE MORE; to experience anything and everything, to rampage through life's adventures and misadventures, to squeeze every ounce of life out of life itself.

The question that begs to be asked is how exactly does one LIVE MORE?

For some people, this might mean living in the fast lane. Others may prefer the stress-free stability of family life or the devil-may-care existence of a wanderer. Then there are those go-getters who climb the corporate ladder and the thrill-seekers who laugh at the face of danger.

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Editor Louie C. Camino

4 of 8 film fest films linked to Mother Lily

Lamangan listed as director of 3 final entries

By Nini Valera and Marinel Cruz

REGAL Entertainment producer Lily Monteverde has no less than four entries among the final eight movies chosen for inclusion in December's Metro Manila Film Festival, according to industry insiders. Only one director, Joel Lamangan, is listed as the director of three of those four entries.

Monteverde last month had called for the implementation of a "one-entry-per-producer policy" in the festival.

Her own Regal Films is producing Joel Lamangan's "Que Sera Sera," and MAQ Productions, known to be a sister company of Regal, is producing "Mano Po 3." Another Lamangan film, "Aishite Imasu 1941," is produced by BasFilm Pictures, while Yam Laranas' "Sigaw" by MegaVision.

Both BasFilm and MegaVision are "closely identified" with the Regal matriarch, according to industry sources.

MONTEVERDE. Regal Films only "helped" two other outfits, says her daughter.

The festival's executive committee, however, said Monteverde only has two entries, "Que Sera Sera" and "Mano Po 3." The Regal Films producer's daughter, Rochelle Monteverde, also said MegaVision and BasFilm Pictures are separate entities and are not connected with Regal Films.

She said Regal only "helped" the two film outfits. "They borrowed stars," she said.

Star Cinema and Angora Films pulled out the scripts they submitted for inclusion in the festival even as Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando announced yesterday the eight finalists.

Last year, Star Cinema also pulled out Olive Lamasan's "Milan," but only after the finalists had been chosen. Star Cinema's entries this year were supposed to have been director Rafael Laurel's "Lihim," starring Jericho Rosales, Diether Ocampo and Claudine Barretto; and "D' Anothers," a probable Vhong Navarro vehicle, with Joyce Bernal directing.

Angora Films pulled out Jeffrey Jeturian's "Sa Pagkagat ng Dilim," a "suspense thriller/horror" movie which would have starred Jay Manalo and Aleck Bovick.

Before announcing the finalists, Fernando, as festival overall chair, said three movies had pulled out, but he did not say their titles. INQUIRER Entertainment learned which movies had pulled out from other sources.

And then there are 8

Reading from a list, Fernando, who arrived more than an hour after the scheduled 2 p.m. press conference, announced the finalists in order of ranking:

"Mano Po 3" of MAQ Films, directed by Joel Lamangan and starring Vilma Santos, was No. 1 choice of the screening committee, which had mostly MMDA officials occupying the top posts.

In second spot was Viva Films' "Lastikman," directed by Mac Alejandre. Third place was "Enteng Kabisote" of OctoArts Films, with Tony Y. Reyes directing and Vic Sotto in the title role.

Joel Lamangan's epic drama "Aishite Imasu 1941," starring Raymart Santiago, Judy Ann Santos and Dennis Trillo came in fourth. The movie is produced by BasFilm Pictures.

Cesar Montano's "Panaghoy sa Suba" came in fifth. Sixth was MegaVision's "Sigaw," directed by Yam Laranas and starring Richard Guttierrez, Jomari Yllana, Iza Calzado, Angel Locsin, James Blanco and Ronnie Lazaro.

Seventh was Regal Films "Que Sera Sera," and eighth was Canary Films' "Bulong," to be directed by Joey Javier Reyes. Their seventh and eighth positions mean they will be shown starting Jan. 1, 2005, while the first six entries will be shown starting on Christmas Day play date.

Last month, Monterverde had issued a statement urging the film festival organizing committee to go back to its old format of having only six entries instead of nine as has been practiced for the past two years.

"That way, each (participating) producer can earn more," Monteverde had said. She said this could also inspire producers to make good movies for the festival even if they are big-budget movies.

Now filming

Some industry insiders, however, pointed out that at least two of the entries, both from Monteverde's Regal Films or outfits associated with her, had started filming even before the final eight were announced.

INQUIRER Entertainment was told that director Laranas has been shooting "Sigaw" for more than a week now, and Lamangan has also started with "Aishite Imasu."

One industry insider protested the "injustice," noting that both movies are "closely identified with Mother Lily."

Aside from producing "Enteng Kabisote," OctoArts Films producer Orly Ilacad is also said to be "connected" to the production of "Bulong" from Canary Films.

Another member of the movie industry said, "this could have been a good film fest if other independent film outfits were given the chance."

But the industry member added that Monteverde and Ilacad were "not guilty of anything." It is the task of the members of the festival's executive committee to make sure that no irregularities would happen, the industry insider said.

Selection criteria

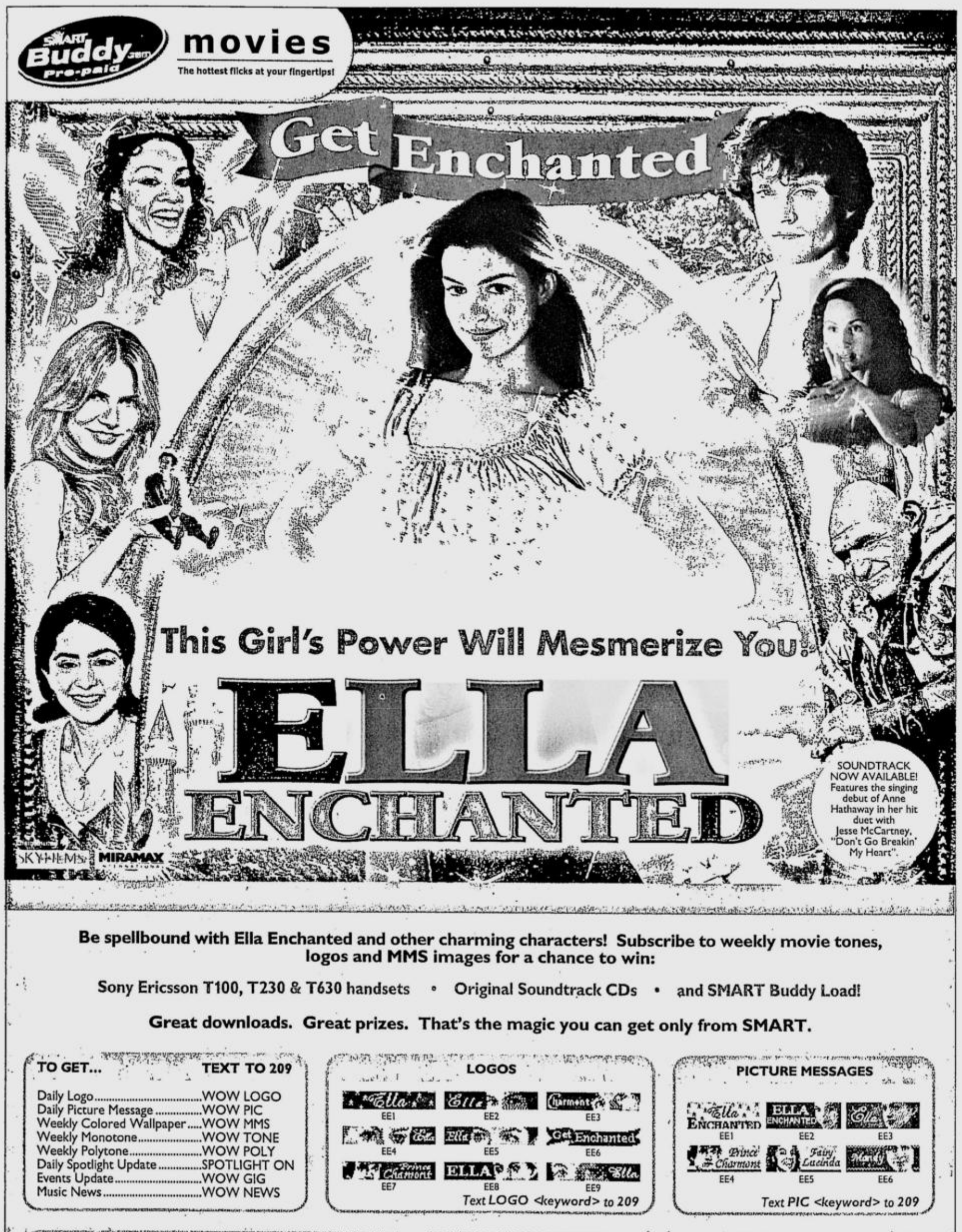
Asked why the choices were mostly commercial movies and not "art house," which would attract serious movie buffs to theaters during the holiday season, lawyer Espiridion D. Laxa, a member of the executive committee, responded by reading the criteria for selecting the entries.

"The criteria are based on creativity, technical excellence, innovativeness and global appeal (which make up) 50 percent (of the total score). Commercial viability is only 30 percent, with positive and Filipino cultural values (20 percent).

"In aid of selection, aside from the three criteria, are creative interpretation of story and screenplay, logical development of character and consistency of story, originality of style, originality or creative story adaptation; social, cultural and moral relevance of values; logical definition of character; extraordinary appeal; global acceptability, entertainment and appeal competitiveness."

Before the eight finalists were announced, word was out that the selection committee had a bias against sex movies, apparently taking its cue from SM Cinemas, which, starting yesterday, stopped showing R-18 movies. This

4 OF 8/ A30



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SMC acquires 50% stake in Aussie firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. yesterday said it had bought a 50-percent stake in Australia's biggest juice maker Berri Ltd. in a deal valuing the firm at $234.5 million (P13.11 billion).

In a joint statement with Berri, SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco said the deal was an important plank in the firm's regional expansion plans.

"It is a terrific complement to our existing portfolio and our buy-in is consistent with San Miguel's strategy to acquire businesses with strategic fit with its core categories," he said.

"With Berri, we are better positioned to build on the many opportunities we see for convenient beverages throughout the Asia-Pacific. We hope to be able to accelerate the regional distribution and growth of Berri products," Cojuangco added.

Berri CEO Alison Watkins said that SMC's investment was a "natural fit and that both companies stand to benefit."

"For Berri, the new partnership will spur market presence into key Asian markets such as Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and China. Developing these markets has always been an integral part of Berri's growth strategy," Watkins said.

SMC, Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm, plans to increase its overseas business to 30 to 40 percent of group revenues in the future compared to less than 15 percent now.

It is building a factory in Thailand and has signed a lease for a drinks plant in Vietnam. It also wants to expand in Australia, Indonesia, Taiwan, China and Malaysia.

Berri's brands, including Berri, Daily Juice, Fruitful Australian Fresh, Just Juice, Mildura'Sunrise and Mr.Juicy, have half of Australia's $890-million (P49.75 billion) juice market. Berri also produces bottled water under its Kyneton Mineral Water and Summit water brands.

COJUANGCO

The remaining 50 percent of Berri is held by its former chair, Douglas Shears.

Coca-Cola Amatil had wanted to buy Berri to shore up slowing growth in its traditional soft drinks, but competition authorities banned the sale.

Also yesterday, SMC reported that its consolidated net earnings expanded by 31 percent to P4 billion in the first half of 2004.

It said that growth in the first half was due to a 6-percent expansion in volumes and a 13-percent increase in consolidated sales revenues to P81.28 billion.

Total operating income climbed 32 percent to P8.11 billion due to higher beer volumes, keeping a lid on fixed costs in the Coca-Cola Beverage Group, improvements in the food group and the recovery of SMC's beer international operations.

Domestic beer's year-to-date operating income rose 25 percent to P4 billion while total revenues registered a 22-percent increase to P18.3 billion.

Meanwhile, international beer sales volume climbed 17 percent for the first semester with sales revenues hitting $120 million.

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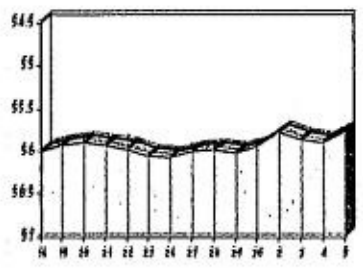

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per ounce Hong Kong, Aug. 5, 2004

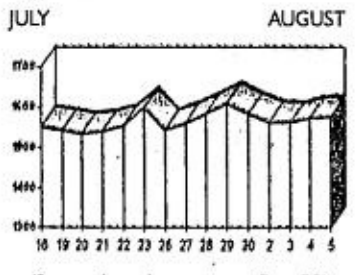
August 3, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.830013	1.000000	55.8840
Japan	Yen	0.007468	0.008998	0.5028
United Kingdom	Pound	1.514857	1.825100	101.9939
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106420	0.128215	7.1652
Switzerland	Franc	0.650378	0.783576	43.7894
Canada	Dollar	0.631333	0.760630	42.5070
Singapore	Dollar	0.482034	0.580754	32.4549
Australia	Dollar	0.584599	0.704325	39.3605
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.201685	2.652590	148.2373
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.221331	0.266660	14.9020
Brunei	Dollar	0.480637	0.579072	32.3609
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000109	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.020029	0.024131	1.3485
UAE	Dirham	0.225989	0.272272	15.2156
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.204800	67.3290
Argentina	Peso	0.275523	0.331950	18.5507
Brazil	Real	0.271512	0.327118	18.2807
Denmark	Kroner	0.134502	0.162048	9.0559
India	Rupee	0.017923	0.021594	1.2068
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218454	0.263193	14.7083
Mexico	New Peso	0.072522	0.087374	4.8828
New Zealand	Dollar	0.536288	0.646120	36.1078
Norway	Kroner	0.119090	0.143480	8.0182
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014176	0.017079	0.9544
South Africa	Rand	0.133169	0.160442	8.9661
Korea	Won	0.000711	0.000857	0.0479
Sweden	Kroner	0.108558	0.130791	7.3091
Syria	Pound	0.020505	0.024704	1.3806
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024412	0.029412	1.6437
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000433	0.000522	0.0292

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.31% higher

SHARE prices closed 0.31 percent higher yesterday, with an early advance capped by profit-taking in telecom stocks after their recent sharp gains, dealers said.

They said they investors may be quick to lock in profits in the coming sessions on concerns over rising global oil prices and prospects of higher local inflation for the rest of the year.



(See stock market report on Page B2)

The latest figures showed inflation jumped sharply in July.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 4.89 points to 1,577.80 having traded between 1,570.91 and 1,578.10.

Turnover was 2.49 billion shares worth P687.5 million after 1.29 billion shares worth P869.89 million on Wednesday.

SHARES/ B2

Arroyo pushes extension of MRT-3 line to Monumento

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the departments of justice and of transportation and communication to iron out the legal kinks impeding the construction of a railway extension connecting the North Edsa station of the Edsa Mass Rail Transit-3 with the Monumento station of Light Railway Transit 1.

Ret. Gen. Roberto Lastimoso, general manager of MRT-3, said the President had made the completion of the MRT extension one of her priority projects in the next six years.

Lastimoso said the President gave the order following an appeal from residents of northern Metro Manila, specifically Kalookan City, which she visited Wednesday in her Pulong ng Bayan, to fast-track the MRT-3 extension to ease their transport needs.

The link-up of MRT-3 with LRT-1 is expected to nearly double ridership at the MRT-3 currently pegged at 350,000 passengers daily.

The President had given the go-ahead for the construction of the 5.12-kilometer extension of MRT 3 worth $213.99 million more than two years ago. The President said the extension would complete the rail transit loop in Metro Manila.

Lastimoso said officials of the DOJ and DOTC met Tuesday to implement the President's marching order to put the MRT extension in motion.

He said the key issue to be resolved was whether the private

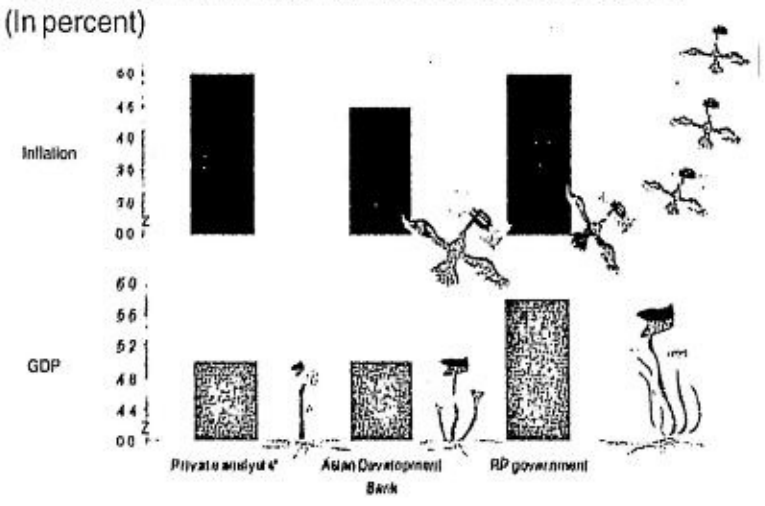
ARROYO/ B3

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Growth and inflation forecast for 2004

(In percent)



* Includes AB Capital Securities, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Cemex Corp., Citibank, CLSA Philippines Deutsche Bank, Equitable PCI Bank, ING Bank, Landbank, Metrobank, Multinational Investments Bancorporation, Nomura Securities, Wallace Business Forum, UBS Warburg Securities

Sources: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Inflation Report-first quarter 2004, Asian Development Bank, PDI archives

THE GOVERNMENT expects economic growth this year to be within the range of 4.9 to 5.8 percent while the Asian Development Bank pegs its forecast at 5 percent. Growth will be driven mainly by increased consumer spending and stronger demand for electronics products that make up 70 percent of the country's total exports. Private analysts predict a low 2.8 percent to 5 percent growth. Inflation is still in the range of 4 to 5 percent, the effects of rising oil prices and weaker peso already taken into account.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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Mini stock market proposed

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ONLINE investment house Cashrounds Inc. yesterday asked the Securities and Exchange Commission if it could operate an alternative trading system (ATS).

With the license to run an ATS, Cashrounds assistant general manager Quintin San Diego Jr. expects to expand the company's existing network of private issuers.

An ATS is an electronic market for buyers and sellers of securities.

According to the SEC, an ATS is "any organization, association, person or group of persons" that operates or provides an electronic market place for bringing together primary market issuers of securities of SEC-registered small, medium, growth, venture enterprises and technology-based ventures and investors who wish to buy securities.

Last April, the SEC issued the Implementing rules and regulations regarding the conduct of ATS operations.

Cashrounds, which effectively had been carrying on ATS operations even before the SEC came out with the grand rules, sought the SEC's permission to be temporarily exempted from coverage under the ATS rules.

"With these new rules, it would be illegal for any person to continue operating as an ATS without a license from the SEC, beginning April 15, 2004," the company said in a letter to the PSE.

To comply with the SEC rules, Cashrounds yesterday formally filed its application.

Cashrounds would then get to provide an electronic facility for investors and private companies to buy and sell securities.

San Diego clarified that unlike the regular stock market, the company does not engage in daily trades, and the deals they broker are usually for medium-term and long-term investors who want to invest in private SMEs.

"We expect business to pick up this year as we play an active role in marketing," San Diego said of the business outlook this year.

Aside from Cashrounds, the Development Bank of the Philippines has expressed interest to operate an ATS.

In the United States, the trade is more popularly known as electronic communication networks, which account for almost a third of trading at the tech heavy Nasdaq market, according to Roger Coffin and Philip Evans who wrote the book "Blown to Bits."

Philip and Coffin said ECNs provide investors with enhanced flexibility and reduced trading costs and introduce competition to recognized securities exchanges. Among the more popular ECNs are Instinet, Island, Bloomberg Tradebook, Archipelago and Wolfex.

Philip and Coffin that the ECNs have split the US equities markets by spreading around the centers of liquidity from the two traditional sources—New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq—transforming the securities industry to multiple pools of trading activity.

Cashrounds is an information technology service company wholly owned by investment house, Amalgamated Investment Bancorporation (AIB). It was originally incorporated as MF Schroeder & Co. Inc. in June 1996 and was initially authorized to engage in buying and selling of equities and other securities.

A new look at job creation

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

SINCE job creation is a key government target over the next six years, it is important that we take a deeper look into this issue. Doubts arose when one government official claimed that more than one million jobs were created in agriculture in 2002, yet the National Statistics Office reported only 200,000 new jobs were created that same year.

A possible interpretation is that one million jobs may have been created, 800,000 jobs were lost and the increase of 200,000 jobs was the result.

There is another cautionary note about the reported 200,000 new jobs. If a person responding to a job survey said that he worked for only one hour the previous week, he was considered employed. For example, if two people harvested *palay* in a given hectare the previous year, and a third person helped in the current year for a few hours doing the same work, this was considered one new job. This is the case even though no additional economic service has been rendered, since the two workers first mentioned would have done the job anyway.

Job creation targets

A government finance institution submitted a target of creating 943,000 jobs for the first 100 days of the current administration.

Below is the table of their preliminary estimates for each agriculture sub-sector.

Subsector	Loan amount	No. of jobs	Cost to create job
Rice	P232M	39,500	P5,900
Corn	159M	27,100	5,900
Fishery	62M	10,600	5,800
Livestock	94M	1,800	50,000
High-value crops	120M	10,900	11,000
Livelihood	276M	15,500	17,900
Total	P943M	105,400	WTD Ave P8,900

Two points can be made regarding the above.

Firstly, it would cost much less to create a job in agriculture (P8,900) compared to more than P1 million to create a job in industry. Even with the limited resources, focus must be given to agriculture to maximize new jobs.

This is so long as there are ready markets for the agricultural products.

Secondly, many of the target loan beneficiaries in the above table may already have existing jobs. They only may have changed their sources of fund from moneylenders to this government institution.

However, this does not diminish the importance or desirability of the government plan. Many of the jobs may in fact be new. If not, at least the workers get to benefit from a better funding source.

Another perspective

One must look at the job issue not only in terms of quantity, but also of quality (or productivity) of the jobs.

Take the case of Aling Crisencia Sialana, a fisher from Barangay Tamil, in the coastal town of Jose Dalman, Zamboanga Del Norte. She was classified as having a job because of her traditional fishing activities which produced very minimal fish catch. But her family seldom ate three meals a day.

Recently, she changed her job from traditional fishing to seaweed farming. She now earns more than ten times her previous income. As a result, her husband had stopped working overseas and joined her in seaweed farming.

Another fisher from Barangay Tamil, Aling Felicitas Patria, also shifted to seaweed farming. She has since constructed her own tiled brick house furnished with furniture, TV set, component system, gas range and more. Like Aling Crisencia's husband, her spouse also joined her in seaweed production.

These job changes have dramatically improved the income of Aling Cresencia and Aling Felicitas.

According to Marco Imperial, Quedan and Rural Credit Corp. (Quedancor) district supervisor, workers during a good cropping season may expect a per hectare revenue of P900,000, based on the conservative buying rate of P30 per kilo of seaweed. For the first cropping, total cost may reach P384,000—P120,000 for the seaweed strings, P180,000 for the seaweed seedlings and P84,000 for the payment of 5 regular and 15 temporary workers. This results in an expected net profit of P384,000 per hectare.

Catalysts

Aling Cresencia and Aling Felicitas are still listed as having jobs. But the quality of their jobs has not been captured in the survey, though this has improved their lives tremendously and catalyzed the creation of new jobs.

Much of the credit goes to Quedancor. It emphasized new production technology and ready markets when they extended loans to Aling Cresencia and Aling Felicitas using Quedancor's Self-Reliant Team financing model.

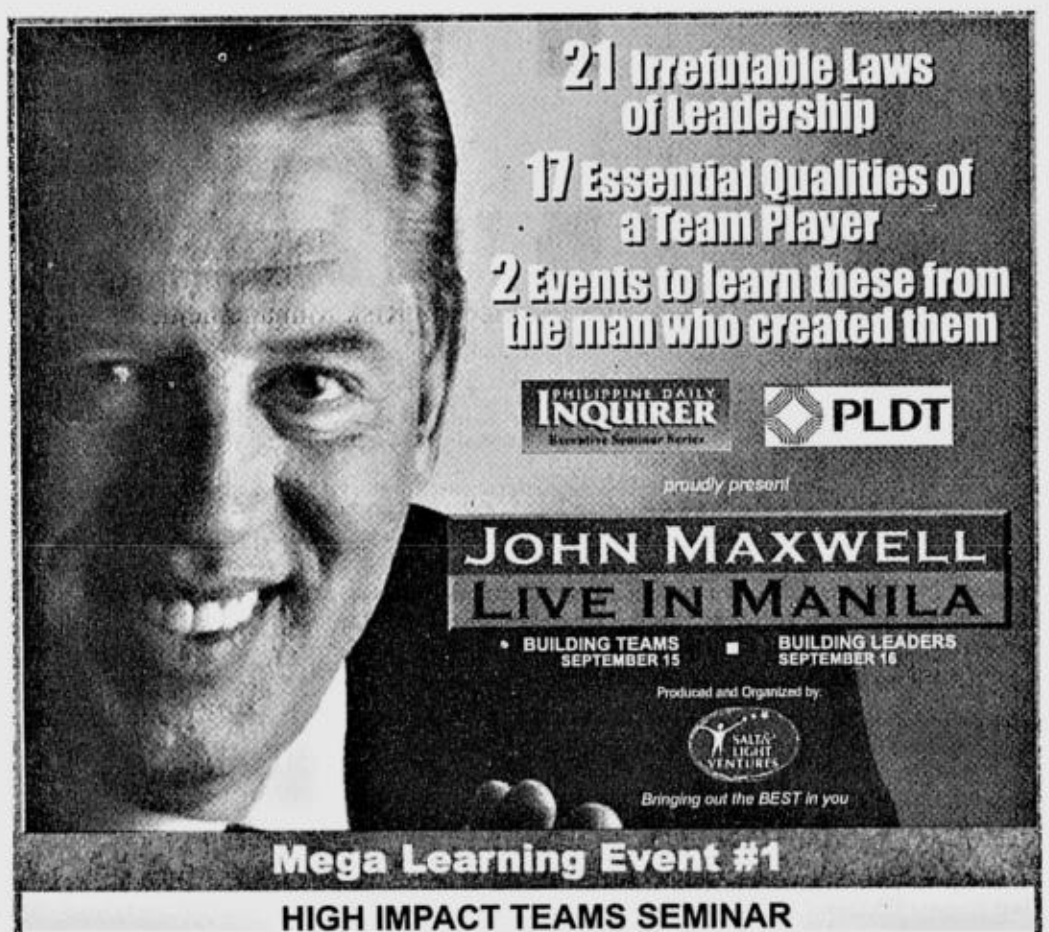
While Bangladesh has its Grameen lending system, the Philippines has its SRT model developed largely by Quedancor president Nelson Buenaflor. SRT adds to the Grameen model the technology and market emphasis that starts at the smallest production unit. This graduates to integrated clusters that use economies of scale and includes processing and marketing.

Coordination is also undertaken with local government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry. Most importantly, the local people themselves have become the primary change catalysts for job quality improvement and new job creation.

Sustainable jobs

At the municipal level, the law mandates that the Municipal Agriculture and Fishery Councils (MAFC) should be the primary government-private sector entity to promote agricultural development. But today, many MAFCs are denied information on how government resources such as the DA budget are used in their locality. It is recommended that the MAFCs be given this information. This will not only prevent corruption, it will also allow the people to recommend the best use of government resources for improving the quality and quantity of jobs following the SRT model. With this new look at job creation, there will be more Aling Cresencias and Aling Felicitas. And the objective of having more meaningful and sustainable jobs will have a far greater chance of being fulfilled.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635)



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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 5, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	3,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	40.5	41	40.5	41	248,800
China Banking Corp.	535	540	535	540	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	24,800
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.48	850,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25.5	26	25.5	26	61,000
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	12,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	9,000
Security Bank Corp.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	9,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	24	24.5	23.75	23.75	23,700
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2200	2225	2200	2225	560
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	107	107	106	106	2,300
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1530	1535	1530	1530	1,610
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	140,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	895	900	890	900	65,020
ISM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.038	0.036	0.038	3,700,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.26	2.4	2.26	2.4	38,897,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.21	80,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1285	1290	1270	1280	192,640
Ivantage Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.58	1,460,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	8,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.25	15.25	14.75	14.75	108,400
Manila Electric Co. B	22.5	22.75	21.75	21.75	2,182,100
Petron Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	1,414,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.02	2.02	2	2	305,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.12	1.12	1.04	1.06	256,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	250,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	117,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.42	150,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.4	0.4	5,860,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.7	1.7	710,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	208,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	15,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	24.5	26	24.5	25.5	458,500
RFM Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.79	0.81	150,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.42	260,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	57	57	15,200
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	68.5	68.5	68.5	320,100
Universal Robina Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	256,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	5,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	3,000,000
Ayala Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	4,415,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	500,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	7,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,000,000
APC Group Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.006	235,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	60,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.5	1.5	84,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	1,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.155	0.17	0.155	0.165	2,620,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.5	0.51	10,020,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.18	5,010,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	800,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.02	1.1	11,559,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	3,500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	10,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	6,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	24	24	23	23	1,029,700
Global Equities Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.065	0.065	2,600,000
Ionics Inc.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	102,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	256,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.54	463,000
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	1,282,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,170,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	20,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.15	0.15	800,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.2	0.19	0.19	1,100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	60,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	80,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	70,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	3,500,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	140,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	1,490,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.28	880,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	150,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	20	20.25	20	20.25	57,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	3,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.5	4,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,800
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,200
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.7	3,089,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.45	0.5	0.45	0.5	280,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	460,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	850,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.98	4,200,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	40,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	600,000
SM Development Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	21,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	6.1	5.9	6	4,422,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	25,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.05	3.05	3	3	69,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	820,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	1,510,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.019	0.017	0.019	1,609,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.019	0.021	0.019	0.021	852,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.0038	0.004	0.0038	0.0038	508,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	1,010,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.11	0.15	0.11	0.15	750,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	112,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	250,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	10,000

DISCLOSURES

MULTITECH Investments Corp. tentatively rescheduled its annual stockholders' meting on Nov. 29.

* * *

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. bought 45,000 of its own shares at P1.90 each and another 299,000 of its B shares also at P1.99 each.

* * *

CASHROUNDS Inc. filed an application for Alternative Trading System with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 25,000 of its own shares at P1.32 each.

* * *

THE LISTING of **Vivant Corp.**'s over 198.5 million preferred shares to cover its share-for-share swap transaction with JEG Development Corp., MAI-I Resources Corp, Hijos de F. Escano Inc. and Antonio Garcia is set for today (Aug. 6).

* * *

THE TOTAL number of common shares listed under **Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp.**'s employee stock option plan reached over 13.1 million following the listing today (Aug. 5) of 625,000 shares that Reynaldo Paulino availed and fully paid for.

* * *

THE TOTAL number of common shares listed under **Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company**'s Executive Stock Option Plan reached 142,334. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Shares close . . .

From page B1

Losers edged out gainers 38 to 37, with 43 stocks unchanged.

The all-shares index rose 2.86 points at 1,007.76, the commercial-industrial index gained 0.57 to 2,492.99, property was up 6.56 to 541.37, oil was steady at 1,54 and banking and finance was up 3.50 at 456.

The National Statistics Office reported that consumer prices in July rose 6.6 percent from a year earlier after 5.4 percent in June.

"The price of oil has risen 36 percent this year amid concerns that supplies may not meet demand. The market is likely to remain wary of oil as long as it remains above the critical level of 40 dollars per barrel," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities. *AFP*

Quashed

LAWRENCE Qua, the president/CEO of Ionics Circuits, has beaten the deadbeat charge and foreclosure attempt filed by his partner, Marcos Energy Minister Geronimo Velasco, over the P14.2-million bank debts of their failed IT venture.

Velasco's Gervel holding company and the Republic Glass Corp. foreclosed on Qua's collateral, on the strength of the surety agreement that Gervel, RGC, and Qua pledged to Metrobank and the old PDCP Bank to obtain a foreign currency-denominated loan for Ladtek, their IT venture that collapsed in the late '80s.

But since Gervel and RGC had already settled their proportionate bank obligations, it is now up to the banks, not Gervel and RGC, to go after Qua, the Supreme Court said in a recent ruling.

"The creditors, namely Metrobank and PDCP, merely proceeded against RGC and Gervel for their proportionate shares only," noted Justice Antonio Carpio. Since there has been no novation—the substitution of a new legal obligation for an old one—of the surety agreement, "consequently, RGC and Gervel cannot validly foreclose the pledge of Qua's GMC (General Milling Corp.) shares of stock which served his obligation to reimburse."

Dirge for Red's dig

A CONDO unit still registered in the name of Redentor Romero is being auctioned by the Makati Sheriff's Office on Tuesday to satisfy a P4.1-million debt left behind by the late conductor with United Coconut Planters Life Assurance.

The 179-square-meter unit, which comes with a parking slot, is on the 11th floor of the Le Metropole on the Buendia side of Salcedo Village.

It is not clear who stayed in that Salcedo condo unit, Romero having preferred his Eurovilla unit in Legaspi Village when he was still alive.

Tata takes over

NATIONAL Museum advocate Concepcion "Tata" Poblador has finally displaced her brother Honorio III aka BabyBoy, and represented the family's investment firm during yesterday's stockholders' meeting of the sequestered Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp.

With her at the helm, at least there will be no Cuneta Avenue and West Coast shopping charges appearing in the corporate credit card statement.

Hair today, gone tomorrow

A FASHION model of Cosmopolitan magazine is suing a leading cosmetics company after she allegedly went nearly bald after using the company's best-selling hair treatment during an extended photo shoot.

The irony is that the model, who shall remain unnamed in the meantime, had been precisely hired by the cosmetics company, who shall also remain unnamed in the meantime, to endorse the hair treatment in a new ad campaign.

Clue? The suit has been filed in Quezon City.

Heard through the grapevine

THE LONG-SIMMERING boardroom dispute within Diamond Motors Corp. is about to boil over into the courts, with an old case of kidnapping being dredged up, to be filed against one of the protagonists.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com)

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Bangko Sentral relaxes rules on tier-2 capital

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has relaxed the rules on the issuance of subordinated debt or tier-2 capital to make available this fund-raising option to smaller banks.

In an interview, BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Alberto Reyes said the Monetary Board had scrapped a rule that allowed only banks with quasi-banking license to issue unsecured subordinated notes.

"They no longer need a quasi-banking license to raise tier-2 capital. The role of quasi-banks relates to borrowing for the purpose of re-lending. This (activity) is for capital-raising," Reyes said.

Quasi-banks are defined as entities engaged in obtaining funds other than deposits from more than 19 creditors for the purpose of re-lending. These include investment houses and financing companies.

Reyes said all commercial banks had quasi-banking licenses and were, therefore, free to go into tier 2 capital-raising. However, he said that thrift banks could not do the same because they did not have quasi-banking licenses.

"There is a proposal from a thrift bank but it could not proceed with it because of the restriction," Reyes said. Thrift banks include savings and mortgage banks, private development banks and stock savings/loan associations. They cater mostly to retail clients and businesses engaged in agriculture, services and housing.

Under the new risk-based capital adequacy framework adopted by the BSP, qualifying capital consists of tier-1 or core capital and tier-2 or supplementary capital, less deductions.

The delineation between core and supplementary capital is based on the ability of a bank to absorb losses.

The level of tier-2 capital is capped at 100 percent of tier-1 capital. It includes quasi-banks' issuances of unsecured subordinated term debt subject to certain conditions.

Deductions include equity investments in subsidiaries and reciprocal investments in other enterprises, which reflect the multiple use of capital.

The guidelines on tier-2 implement the recommendations of the Bank for International Settlements' Basel Committee, the international standard-setting body for banks.

While banks across the region are now cleaning up their bad assets that piled up since the 1997 Asian currency turmoil, regulators are fine-tuning their own regulatory and supervisory practices in line with the BIS standards.

In the Philippines, tougher risk management guidelines have compelled banks to issue tier-2 instruments and consider other long-term debt instruments, including long-term negotiable certificates of deposits and senior notes.

PRULINK	PRU LIFE U.K.	
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week August 03, 2004	Last Week July 27, 2004
Bond Fund - Peso	1.15376	1.14996
Managed Fund - Peso	1.20895	1.20780
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.0339	1.0256

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

Arroyo ...

From page B2

Edsa MRT Corp.—builder of MRT 3—should undertake the project or whether it should be up for public bidding.

Edsa MRT claimed that it owned the right to build the extension based on a supplemental agreement it signed with the DOTC in 1999.

The DOJ, however, has ruled that the supplemental agreement had already lapsed and the project should be scheduled for re-bidding. The DOTC, on the other hand, insisted that the project would be up for a Swiss challenge wherein other private groups could still come forward to make an offer but Edsa MRT Corp. would retain the right to match any new bid.

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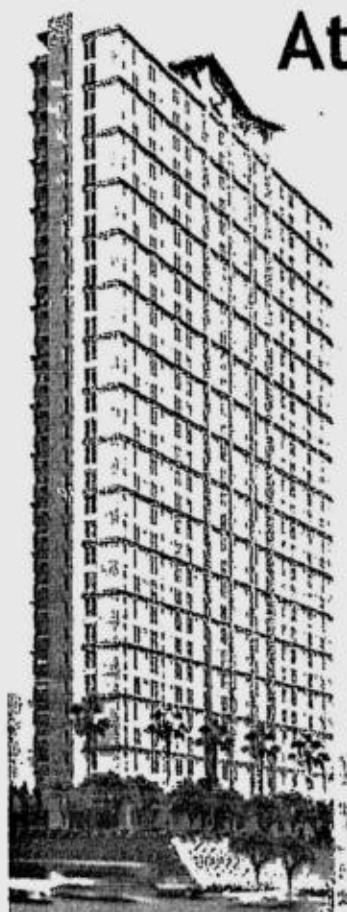

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AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, Year Ended December 31, 2003 (Standard Insurance Co., Inc.; eStandard Insurance Corporation, formerly Zurich General Philippines, Inc.; and Standard Security Re, Ltd.)

Combined	(in P'000)
Premium, net	1,814,877
Premiums retained	1,316,609
Net Underwriting Income	525,508
Consolidated	
Net Income	200,374
Total Assets	2,751,933
Total Liabilities	1,610,944
Capital Stock	600,000
Contributed Surplus	3,904
Reserve for fluctuation	12,161
Retained earnings	524,925
Stockholders' Equity	1,140,989

AUDITORS: SGV & CO., Ernst & Young

STANDARD INSURANCE CO., INC., is the leader in motorcar insurance and a major player in non-motor lines; Has the highest Paid-up Capital in the industry at P600,000,000.00; Accredited with most Banks & Financial Institutions; Widest branch network located in key cities of the country; Has the Most extensive Car dealer tie-ups and the only insurance company with its own Technical Department which provides Technical Assistance all over the country.

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines 1554
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE BANK : REGISTRATION OF SECURITIES

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on July 28, 2004, a registration statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE BANK for the registration of the following securities: (1) P442,000,000.00 to P835,000,000.00 worth of common shares, consisting of 4,420,000 to 8,350,000 primary common shares with a par value of P100.00 per share, to be offered to the public by way of an initial public offering at an offer price range of between P160.00 to P190.00 per share; (2) P2,500,000,000.00 worth of issued and outstanding common shares, consisting of 25,000,000 shares with a par value of P100.00 per share.

According to the papers presented, the following persons are the officers/directors of the corporation:

NAME	POSITION
Gerardo O. Lanuza, Jr.	Chairman
Ben C. Tiu	Vice Chairman
Ramon Y. Sy	President & Chief Executive Officer
Wilson L. Sy	Director
Wilfredo C. Tecson	Director
Ruben C. Tiu	Director
Walter W. Brown	Director
Enrique K. Razon, Jr.	Director
Dante g. Santos	Director
Gregorio T. Yu	Director
A. Bayani K. Tan	Corporate Secretary

Said registration statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours, and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

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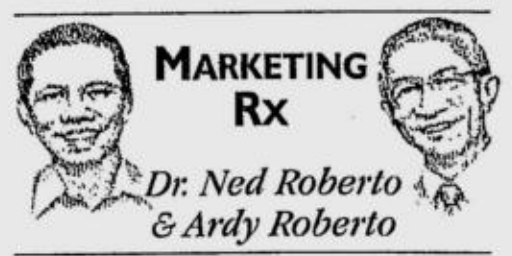
BUSINESS Friday

Is marketing success always about being market-driven--II



MARKETING Rx

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

HERE'S our second case of market-driving targeting: the case of pHCare, a case of a new brand in an established category. We did write about this product launch case briefly in a column last year, now it's time to reveal the learnings in detail.

The established product category is of course the feminine wash category. The pHCare product management team's consumer understanding research (CUR) found the following basic market situation in the category.

There is a dominant market leader brand and that's Lactacyd of Sanofi. The category's market penetration was just fifth of the eligible female population. There was a huge 80 percent category non-users. The same CUR found that almost all category users started their use because of their Ob-Gyne's recommendation when they had UTI. So consumers had learned to position Lactacyd as a medicine against UTI. The company's technical and scientific research revealed that Lactacyd's pH balance was suitable for the vagina but not for the female's external genitalia. Lactacyd's pH balance was therefore not suited for daily care.

Brand management in action

The brand management team targeted two market segments. The first was the segment of Lactacyd users. This was the brand's chosen PTM (primary target market) segment. The marketing task here was one of persuading users to switch brands. The second target market was the larger population of category non-users. This was the brand's defined STM (secondary target market segment). For their feminine wash needs, consumers in this segment were using soap and others just water. The marketing task here was to demonstrate the performance superiority of pHCare versus soap and against water so that consumers would category switch.

The market-driving targeting of the PTM segment aimed at getting consumers in this segment to learn at least three things. First is learning the difference between a feminine wash for daily care versus against infection, UTI in particular.

The second target learning is feminine wash for daily care is about washing the external genitalia. For this, the appropriate pH balance is 5.5. On the other hand, feminine wash against infection is about cleaning the vagina. For this, the suitable pH balance is 3.5. Interchanging the two exposes the user to the risk of fungal infection.

The third target consumer learning is the competing brand's respective pH balance. Lactacyd has 3.5 pH balance. It is therefore a medicine against infection. On the other hand, pHCare has a 5.5 pH balance. It's therefore for daily care.

Marketing history shows the unprecedented success of this market targeting strategy of market-driving (i.e. pHCare became No. 1 and market leader within a year of its launch).

Conclusions? First, targeting the right market follows the dictates of the marketing concept. This concept views the consumers and the market they define as knowing what they want and need. So the market targeting task is first to find out this want and need is. Having found the market segment with the priority need that your product can satisfy in some distinctive unique way, the appropriate competitive strategy follows: give that market the product that it wants and needs. This renders the process of targeting the right market as being market-driven.

'Consumers must learn'

Next, having chosen the target market, the succeeding task of evolving and sustaining the brand positioning in the target market requires that the market learns two things: (1) the brand's distinctive meaning or why it is uniquely different from others, and (2) the brand's direct link to the consumer's priority need or evolved priority. This requirement for target market learning changes the market targeting equation from being market-driven to market-driving.

According to Professor Greg Carpenter's study, today's consumers know little about most new products and services. And so market learning must happen if these new products and services are to succeed. Consumers must learn. In fact, they have to learn even what they want. This learning takes place in experiencing the new product or service. In turn, the experiencing comes from what marketers offer and present in their communication materials. All these define a new competitive market-driving strategy of market targeting. It says: Get consumers to learn what they want and then after, give them what they learned to want.

Now getting consumers to learn what they want is the same as saying that you are making your target market right. And making the target market right is the market targeting strategy of being market-driving.

Because of the unquestioned acceptance of the marketing concept, we have become unappreciative of a market reality around us. That reality tells us that consumer learning is happening across new as well as established products, across different times and places. Successful market-driving is truer and more often the case than a market-driven targeting.

The cases of Starbucks (discussed last week) and pHCare and our analysis of each of them tell us the following:

While there are more occasions when you must do market-driving targeting than market-driven targeting, this is not to say that the former is more important than the latter. What this is saying is the following:

1. Learn to be explicit about your market-driving strategies.

2. Learn the correct competitive segmentation strategy.

Do a complete market targeting. The operative word is "complete." And what is a complete market targeting?

Number 1: After targeting the right market via the market-driven strategy, then proceed to make that target market right through market-driving targeting.

Number 2: After making a target market right via market-driving, then go on and continue to targeting that right market through a market-driven strategy.

If all this drives you crazy then switch careers. Marketing as a profession has really become demanding and challenging and crazy! There's no or little time to relax but the rewards are in the work and the results that you get. Happy target marketing!

Feedback at MarketingRx@SaltandLightVentures.com. Or text us at 0919-314-5412.

Telco sets centers out of MM, creates micro entrepreneurs

By Clarissa S. Batino

THERE is money to be made in mobile phone cards and a growing number of students, housewives, office workers and *sari-sari* store owners are finding out this gold mine for themselves.

Anybody with about P1,500 in capital can go to a Globe Telecom business center or The Hub, the flagship retail shop of Globe, to be an accredited sales agent.

One could either sell the plastic cards or be an electronic loader—the latter being the more preferred mode for smaller retail agents nowadays, not only because the margins are higher but also because it is more convenient.

Lizanne Uychaco, Globe vice president and head of sales and distribution, says all one has to do is to buy a retailer SIM (subscriber identification module) card for P200 and top-up an initial load of about a thousand bucks.

"With that, you are good to go. You can sell an electronic load to your friends via text. Many people are making money out of this, including students who could earn about a thousand or more in a month," she notes.

Globe now has more than 4,000 retailers selling its products. Uychaco says these people are not only helping Globe expand but are also creating an important economic multiplier by spreading wealth.

"Just imagine that if these 4,000 people each have families of six, then we are helping 24,000. If we could help send one more child to school, touch more lives, then we become more significant and we help move the economy forward," she says.

UYCHACO

A lot of resources circulate around the telecom services. Last year for instance, Filipinos spent about P90 billion in telecom services—double what they spent for beverages.

"There are significant resources flowing in the telecom business. We want to let more people engage in the products so that we could spread the wealth," says the Globe official.

This is the reason why the staff in each Globe center and Hub is equipped to help potential retailers; not just sell phones and plans, says Uychaco.

A retail agent is given about 14 percent in discount when buying the electronic load. Somebody who could sell about P4,000 in credit earns an easy P550.

Uychaco notes the discounts Globe gives its agents are more than what other manufacturers give their distributors.

To make more money, retailers could even sell it at a higher price but not lower, she adds.

Globe is also co-branding with names like McDonalds, Jollibee, Seattle's Best, Bench, Kodak, Avon, and others, to market and distribute its products.

Distribution, aside from marketing, is key to improving sales, says Uychaco. In the case of Globe, which is in a feverish rush to build subscriber base and catch up with fierce rival Smart, this is even more important.

Uychaco admits that Smart had headway in retailing and distribution, especially in the provinces where it started rolling out earlier.

Globe, she says, is catching up with the network rollout outside of Metro Manila and is complementing this with an equally aggressive establishment of distribution centers.

The joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom is spending $350 million this year to put up 1,000 cellular sites and build its network to close to 4,000 sites.

Uychaco says that Globe now has 76 business centers nationwide. Of the 29 opened last year and the 13 set out for 2004, the bulk is in the provinces.

By year end, more than half of the company's distribution centers are outside Metro Manila already, in line with the company's goal of tapping a wider segment of the market, she says.

"The network and the business centers go hand in hand. Once you have coverage in a certain area, you must have a physical presence. People must see your establishment, talk to the people, see the phones available," she notes.

"I think we continue to be the preferred brand. It helped that early on, Globe was able to build this image of prestige. So people tend to want us, they aspire for our product," she says.

From brand meats to one-stop shops

FROM branded meat products to neighborhood meat shops, Monterey, recently opened a one-stop convenience shop that sells pork and beef, vegetables, and an array of complementary products customers need when cooking meat products.

The new shop in Marcelo Green Village, Parañaque City adopts the new look which Monterey meat shops will soon sport.

"Monterey started the neighborhood meat shop concept in the Philippines," says Joal Arellano, national sales and franchising manager of Monterey. "This is part of Monterey's service—we listen to the suggestions of the customers and they really want all the ingredients sold together with the meats. We also wanted to align our new meat shop to the objective of San Miguel, which is to synergize, that's why we are selling mostly San Miguel complementary products along with Monterey meats."

Monterey is the first manufacturer of branded fresh meats to expand into franchising operations. This initiative helped provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and consumer access to a ready supply of safe, top-quality pork and beef. To maintain its lead in the market, Monterey plans to improve customer service through aggressive local store marketing promotions, the Monterey Value Plus loyalty rewards program, and regular training for its staff.

"We've also tied up with myAyala.com so now even the OFWs in the United States and the Middle East can order online and we will deliver to their relatives in the Philippines. Eventually this will be implemented nationwide," Arellano reports. "Aside from that, we will also have a one-phone number delivery facility in the Greater Manila Area to make the service centralized, more efficient and easier for the customers."

THE OPENING was attended by San Miguel Purefoods executives Francisco S. Alejo III, president of Pure Foods Hormel Corp.; and Tomas V. Loanzon, VP of San Miguel Pure Foods Co.

VAT and GRT: There and back again

By Jose A. Osana and Menchie Tormon
SGV & Co.

(Last of two parts)

EVEN as Republic Act No. 9238 provides that it is effective Jan. 1, 2004, it was only published in newspapers of general circulation on Feb. 16, 2004. In the landmark case of Tanada vs. Tuvera, G.R. No. L-63915, April 24, 1985), the Supreme Court emphasized that unless so published, laws shall have no binding effect.

The BIR came up with measures to address issues regarding the transition from VAT to GRT for transactions from Jan. 1, 2004 until RA 9238 was published. Revenue Memorandum Circular (RMC) 9-2004 dated Feb. 19, 2004 provides guidelines for banks and financial institutions which have issued VAT receipts for services rendered before Feb. 16, 2004.

The following rules apply to all transactions entered into by banks for January 2004:

1. Having issued VAT receipts and collected VAT for its January transactions, banks shall file a VAT return, and remit the VAT due thereon on or before Feb. 20-25, 2004, as the case may be. The VAT return and the output VAT due for this period shall be the gross output VAT resulting from said transactions without any deduction, except for the creditable VAT actually withheld from the banks and non-financial intermediaries thereon.

2. Bank shall report and pay GRT on transactions entered into for the month of January 2004, said payment shall be due on or before Feb. 25, 2004.

3. No input tax credit shall be allowed for any VAT invoice issued by banks dated 2004, however, clients of banks may include the same as part of the cost of the goods/services subject of the invoice.

4. For transactions entered into in January 2004 for which VAT receipts were issued, clients may request for a refund from the banks provided the said VAT receipts are surrendered to the bank, and the bank cancels the same and issues a non-VAT invoice in place thereof.

5. The bank may claim an adjustment of the VAT reported and paid for in the taxable month January 2004 of the VAT actually refunded to client, against the banks GRT liability for only up to the month of April 2004, thereafter no adjustment shall be allowed. The adjustment must be substantiated by the cancelled VAT invoice surrendered by the client and the non-VAT invoice issued in place thereof.

For Feb. 1-15, 2004 transactions, the following rules apply:

1. The banks shall no longer issue any VAT invoice starting Feb. 16, 2004 (publication date of RA 9238).

2. For transactions covering the period Feb. 1-13, 2004, the same rule applicable to the banks. January 2004 transactions shall apply.

3. GRT on the banks' February 2004 transaction shall be due on or before March 25, 2004.

4. Banks may claim an adjustment of the VAT actually reported and paid for the taxable month of February 2004 and refunded to its clients against the banks GRT liability, provided all the requirements as stated for the January 2004 transactions are also present. After May 2004, no adjustments shall be allowed.

For transactions starting Feb. 16, 2004, the following rules apply:

1. All transactions shall be subject to GRT and the bank shall report and pay for the same on or before March 25, 2004.

2. In the event a VAT invoice is issued for any transaction for any reason whatsoever, the banks shall include in their February VAT return the VAT due on said transaction, and pay the VAT due on or before March 20-25, 2004.

3. However, no transactions for which VAT invoice was issued, whether the same was eventually cancelled or not, be allowed as an adjustment against any GRT liability of the banks.

4. In the event VAT invoices shall be issued, the provisions of the last paragraph of Section 109 of the Tax Code of 1997 shall be applicable, i.e., if the bank who is otherwise not subject to VAT but who issues a VAT invoice or receipt shall, in addition to its GRT liability, shall be liable to VAT without the benefit of input tax credit and such tax shall also be recognized as input tax credit to the purchaser under Section 110 of the Code.

TAX-FILES

After May 2004, no adjustment to GRT liability of banks in connection with its VAT liability will be allowed. Also, no other adjustment other than those provided above shall be allowed against the GRT liability of the banks and non-bank financial intermediaries.

The RMC also clarifies that the VAT returns made by the banks and non-bank financial intermediaries from Jan. 1-Feb. 15, 2004 are being made as a result of them having issued VAT invoice, and not because their services are subject to the VAT system.

RMC 10-2004 also provides interbank transactions entered into by banks and non-bank financial intermediaries in 2004 before the publication of RA 9238 will be governed by the certain provisions including:

1. Banks and/or non-bank financial intermediaries shall file a VAT return, and remit the VAT on or before Feb. 25, 2004 for transactions entered into in the month of January 2004, and March 20-25, 2004 for transactions entered into in the month of February 2004 prior to the publication of RA 9238. No deduction or adjustment shall be allowed against the VAT liability arising from interbank transactions entered into during said period.

2. Banks and/or non-bank financial intermediaries shall report and pay GRT on transactions entered into for the month of January 2004 on or before Feb. 25, 2004, and on transactions entered into for subsequent months, on the 25th day following the month when the transactions occurred.

3. No input tax shall be allowed for any VAT invoice issued by banks and/or non-bank financial intermediaries. However, the same may be included as part of the cost of goods/services subject of the invoice, or in the alternative, the VAT invoice may be surrendered to the banks and/or non-bank financial intermediaries issuing the same for the latter to cancel, and a new non-VAT invoice be issued in its place.

4. For transactions entered into in January to Feb. 15, 2004, banks and/or non-bank financial intermediaries may request for a refund from its counterparty banks and/or non-bank financial intermediaries provided the VAT receipts issued for transactions entered into in January 2004 are surrendered on or before April 30, 2004 and transactions entered into in February 2004 are surrendered on or before May 31, 2004, to the bank and/or non-bank financial intermediaries issuing the same, and said VAT invoice is cancelled and a non-VAT invoice issued in its place.

Since BIR issuances merely tackled transition issues, we can expect more regulations to address the perplexities brought about by the reversion to GRT.

La Funeraria Paz-Sucat Celebrates It's Second Anniversary

INAUGURATED and opened to the public last August 6, 2002, in the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat has been providing excellent memorial services to the residents Parañaque, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Makati and nearby areas of Cavite, Laguna and Batangas.

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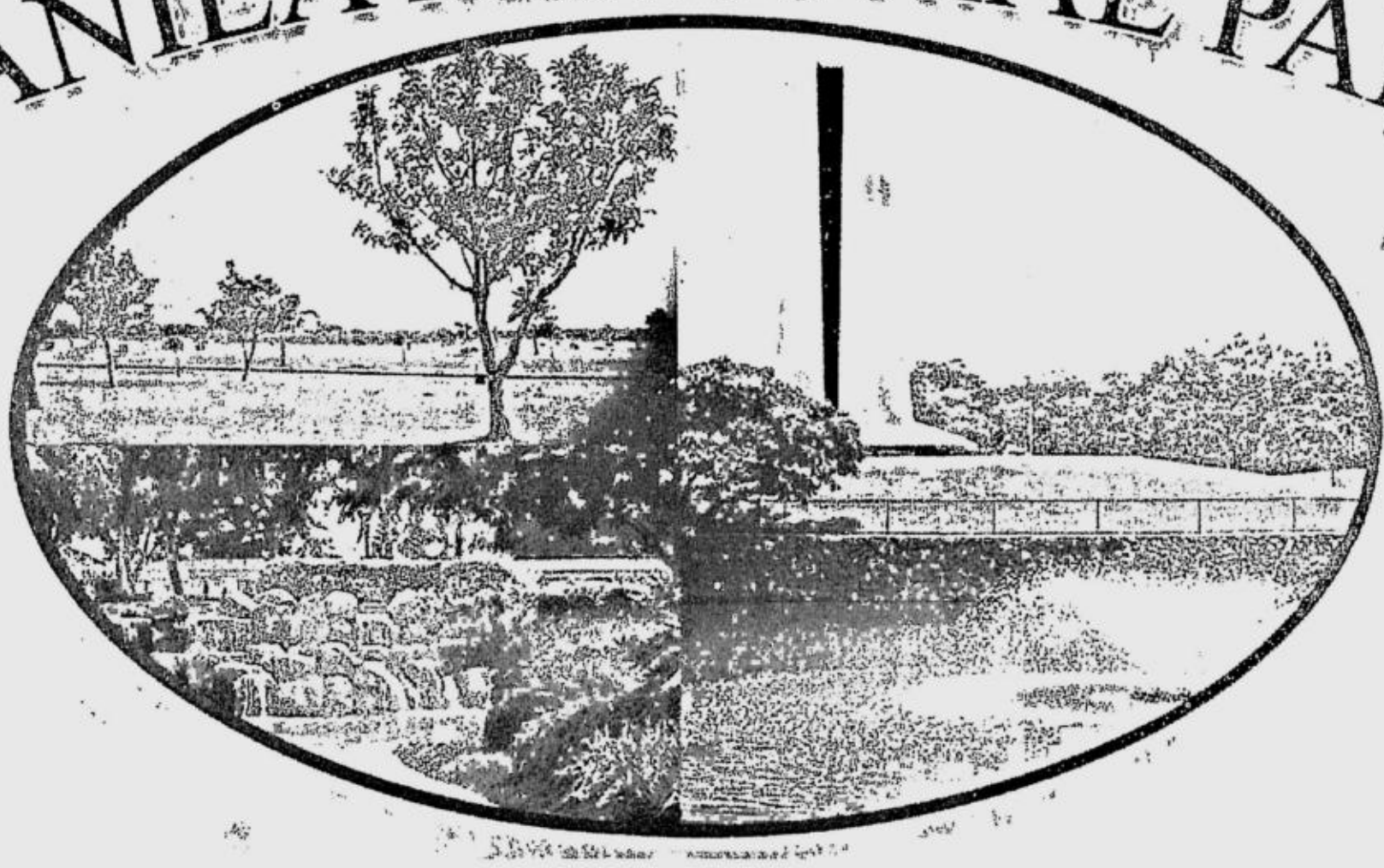

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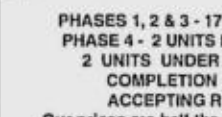

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ONE OF THE MISSIONS of the University of Santo Tomas is to impart and promote to its community, knowledge of the arts and sciences, and one of its visions is to reach its fullest potential in 2011 in terms of pedagogy, research, community service and global acceptability. In line with this, the UST Publishing House intends to produce 40 or more titles every year, so that by 2011 -- the 400th anniversary of UST -- 400 titles would already have been produced.

On Aug 10, the UST Publishing House will hold a book launching at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex at 10 a.m. The following books will be launched: "**Oyayi** (Sarswela ng Pamilyang Pinoy)" by: Frank G. Rivera; "**Eksena't Saknong**" by: Rene O. Villanueva & Ligaya Tiamson Rubin; "**Drawing & Writing** (Exercises for Children with Filipino Translation)" by: Johnny B. Decatoria; "**The Kambayoka Book** (The First Thirty Years of the Sining Kambayoka of the Mindanao State University, Marawi City)" by: Arthur P. Casanova; "**Patenting Life? Stop!**" by: UST Social Research Center & UST Publishing House; "**Galaw ng Asoge**" (Isang Nobela) by: Cirilo F. Bautista; "**Life Hope Holiness** (Theology Week 2003)" edited by: Fr. Fausto B. Gomez, OP & Virgilio T.J. Suerte Felipe; "**College Algebra** (Adapted For Nursing)" by: Rosario F. Atienza, Piedad C. Peña, Analin E. Sevilla; "**Return Flight and other Essays**" by: Tito Alquizola; "**Pharmacology Laboratory Manual**" by: Rosalinda Del Castillo-Solevilla; "**Physics Laboratory Manual**" by: Arnold Almonte, Sandra Sy, Dinah Briones; "**Fundamental Concepts and Methods in Statistics - Part 2**" by: George A. Garcia; "**In the Far Islands**: The Role of the Philippines in the Conquest, Colonization and Repopulation of the Mariana Islands" by: Augusto V. de Viana; "**The God who lives beyond the Temple Walls**" by: Fr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez; "**Sangandiwa** (Araling Filipino Bilang Talastasang Pangkalinangan at Lapit Pananaliksik" by: Rhoderick V. Nuncio & Elizabeth Morales-Nuncio; **History of the Bisayan People in the Phil. Islands Volume 2**" translated by: Fr. Lucio Gutierrez, OP & Cantius J. Kobak OFM; "**Reaching Destination** (Poems & The Search for Home)" by: Nerisa del Carmen Guevara; "**Cadena de Amor**" by: Wilfrido D. Nolledo; "**Pag-uli, Pag-Uwi** (Homecoming)" by: Merlinda Bobis; "**Bin-I** (New Theoretical & Critical Writings on Philippine Studies)" edited by: Janet Tauro-Batuigas & Ernesto V. Carandang II; "**A Novel-In Waiting**" by: Merlinda Bobis; "**Isangdaan at Isang Lungkot at Ligaya**" by: Teo T. Antonio; "**@ Seventy - A Dancer's Show in Oil**" by: Dehlia Napay-Rebustillo and "**Cooperatives**" by: Gil Y. Garcia & Marie Anne Guanzon.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
OLD MIA ROAD, PASAY CITY
METRO MANILA

IN RE: APPLICATION FOR A FOREIGN AIR CARRIER'S PERMIT
PALAU MICRONESIA AIR (PHILS.) INC., Applicant.
CAB CASE NO. 24960

NOTICE OF HEARING

Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 776, as amended, notice is hereby given that **PALAU MICRONESIA AIR (PHILS.) INC.** has filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) an application for the issuance of a Foreign Air Carrier's Permit. The initial hearing of the above entitled case will be held on **19 August 2004 at 2:30 P.M.** at the Conference Room of the CAB, Old MIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila before the undersigned Hearing Officer, at which hearing the applicant shall present its evidence.

The applicant is hereby required to have this Notice of Hearing published at least once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation and that copies of this notice and the application itself be served upon Philippine Airlines, Inc., Cebu Pacific Air, Air Philippines Corporation and Pacific East Asia Cargo Airlines either by personal service or by registered mail with return card at least five (5) days before the scheduled hearing.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition on or before the date of the hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant, and appear at the hearing with such evidence as may be proper under the premises. Failure on the part of any interested party to file its opposition on time and appear at the hearing shall be construed as a waiver of its right to be heard and the Civil Aeronautics Board shall proceed to hear and decide this application on its merit.

Let a copy of this application and this Notice be posted at the CAB Bulletin Board beginning today.

19 July 2004
Pasay City, Philippines

(Sgd.) **FREDERICK G. VILLARIN**
Hearing Officer

(PDI–July 23, 30 & Aug. 6, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

AD NO. 2004-057

Ref. No.: PB-040709-LE0099 / PR No.: SD-04-007560

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TransCo), BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC) - FOR HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/ contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; OR
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; OR
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; OR
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/ or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract; Provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); OR
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of:
   SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING FIREARMS:
   SCHEDULE I – **THREE (3) PIECES OF SUB-MACHINE GUN (CALIBER 9MM X 19)**
   SCHEDULE II – **TEN (10) PIECES OF M-16 RIFLE (CALIBER 5.56 MM X 45)**
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder is specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents to be issued to prospective bidders.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be bid is *P255,000.00* and *P980,000.00* respectively from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **August 06, 2004 to September 13, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **ONE THOUSAND Pesos (P1,000.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **September 02, 2004, 3:00 PM** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **10:00 AM on September 14, 2004** at the Admin Conference room, G/F TransCo Main Building, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – August 6 & 20, 2004)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY

The Bids and Awards Committee - Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP/G-EPS registered companies/contractors and other interested suppliers to apply for eligibility.

Supply of Services of 108 Security Guards (Blue Guards) thru outsourcing

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC): P21,762,000.00 (Annual)

Interested bidders must submit the following documents to the Bids and Awards Committee, Room 212, 2nd Floor, Five-Storey Building corner A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila, not later than 20 August 2004 4:30 p.m., Philippine Time.

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers;
2. Company Background/Profile;
3. Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement and Balance Sheet with a minimum networth of P5.0M and working capital of P2.5M for the last two (2) years, Y2002 and Y2003);
4. Y2002 and Y2003 Income Tax Returns;
5. Valid and current Mayor's permit/municipal license;
6. Prospective bidder's computation of Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contract/P.O.s; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or a cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. THe NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current Assets - Current Liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects; K = 10.
7. Duly notarized statement that the firm is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation;
8. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check;
9. Duly notarized certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy of a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original;
10. Sworn affidavit of the bidder that it is not related to the head of the procurring entity by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.
11. Certified true copy of a valid and current license to operate from PNP-SAGSD (Philippine National Police – Security Agencies and Guards Supervision Division);
12. Certification from the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) that there is no pending labor related case against the agency;
13. Certification from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) that the agency has complied with labor laws and regulations;
14. Certifications on timely payments of contributions for Years 2002 to 2003 and First quarter of Y2004, accompanied by copies of Official Receipts issued by the following agencies;
    - ➢ Social Security System (SSS)
    - ➢ PAG-IBIG
    - ➢ Phil-Health
15. Proof that the prospective bidder has at least 400 Security Guards in actual deployment nationwide;
16. List of Inventory of firearms (duly certified by the PNP Firearms and Explosives Division (PNP-FED) which should not be less than the number of guards in actual deployment), communication equipment and services vehicles; and
17. List of clients at least five (government and private) for the last two (2) years (complete with names of contact person, address and telephone/fax numbers).

Only those who submit/comply with the above requirements shall undergo background investigation to be conducted by the Security Investigation and Transport Department.

The BSP assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate and indemnify the bidders for expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their proposals.

(Sgd.) **DOLORES B. YUVIENCO**
Chairperson

(PDI--Aug. 6, 2004)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar St. cor. Dr. J. Quintos St., Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-00-00; 526-01-00 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorship; or (b) 60% Filipino owned partnerships/corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item/Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2004-173	160 units (40 sets) Secure Currency Cassettes (IBM Part #75G6992), for IBM Diebold	P 3,326,400.00	LBP Funds
2004-174	200 units IBM PCI Multiprotocol Adapter Card (SDLC), PN-12J2981	P 5,400,000.00	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on August 25, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on August 13, 2004, at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Banilad, Cebu City

NOTICE OF SALE THROUGH MARKET DETERMINED PRICING

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** (NFA), Region VII invites all interested NFA licensed grains businessmen to participate in the Sale through Market Determined Pricing (SMDP) for **17,080 bags**, more or less, of **BOC-donated Vietnam rice.** Said stock, stored at Centennial Warehouse, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City, consists of the following brands / lots:

Pile No.	Brand Name	Lot #	Inventory (bags)	Indicative Price (P/kg)
18	Peacock	1	1,175	17.00
17	Premium	2	2,364	17.00
17 & 18	Goldfish	3	5,382	17.00
18	Golden Tree	4	8,159	17.00

Sale shall be on an "as-is-where-is, no-selection, per-lot" basis. Interested parties shall submit the following documents to the SMDP Committee during the pre-SMDP Conference:

1. Certified photo copy of current NFA License / Registration;
2. Duly notarized authorization from the owner/chairman that the representative is presently connected with the firm as an official/employee/stockholder and is authorized to represent the said firm in the SMDP and other related activities; &
3. Certification from the NFA Provincial Registration and Licensing Office, duly noted by the Provincial Manager where the participant is licensed, as to his capitalization.

Offerors shall submit during the SMDP Proper their duly accomplished sealed offer form together with the SMDP bond equivalent to 10% of the total offered amount in the form of either Cash or Manager's / Cashier's Check, payable to NFA. They shall ensure that their capitalization meets their total offered amount. Adjustment is required for those awarded offerors whose capitalization falls below their total offered amount.

SMDP documents can be secured starting August 6, 2004 until 9:00 A.M. of August 11, 2004 from the SMDP Secretariat, NFA Cebu Regional Office, Banilad, Cebu City after payment of a non-refundable fee of Ps 500.00. For further information, interested parties may contact the Asst. Regional Director or the Regional Economist at telephone No. (032) 232-1939. The NFA encourages all interested offerors to conduct an ocular inspection of the subject rice stock prior to the pre-SMDP conference.

A pre-SMDP conference is set at 9:00 A.M.on August 11, 2004 at the 2nd Floor, NFA, Cebu Regional Office, Banilad, Cebu City. Submission and opening of sealed offers are scheduled immediately after the pre-SMDP Conference. In case of unsold volume, another SMDP shall be conducted on August 18, 2004 at the same time and venue and every Wednesday thereafter until all the subject stock shall have been completely disposed.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all offers, waive any informalities or defects found therein, and accept only such offers which are most reasonable and advantageous to the NFA. The decision of the Committee, as confirmed by the Regional Director, shall be deemed final.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO J. ADORABLE**
Asst. Regional Director
SMDPC Chairman

(PDI – August 6, 7 & 8, 2004)

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region XII
Tacurong City

NOTICE OF AUCTION OF RAW SUGAR "B"

The National Food Authority, Region XII, Tacurong City as authorized per AO-2K4-G-006 dated July 02, 2004 wishes to invite all interested licensed sugar traders to participate in the auction sale of the following sugar stocks:

PROVINCE	LOT No.	SUGAR MILL/ LOCATION	VARIETY	VOLUME (Lkg)	INDICATIVE PRICE (Php / Lkg)
COTABATO	1	COTABATO SUGAR CENTRAL CORP. KILADA, MATALAM	RAW SUGAR "B"	2,092.26	760.00
TOTAL				2,092.26	

The auction sale of the above described sugar stocks shall be on a "WHOLE LOT" basis.

The auctioneer shall be required to post a bond equivalent to Ten Percent (10%) of the total peso value of the offer to purchae. The bond shall be in the form of Cash or Manager's/Cashier's Check payable to NFA.

Only Prospective auctioneers who have submitted the following documentary requirements are qualified to participate.

1. Duly certified photocopy of sugar trading license/registration.
2. If through representative, Special Power of Attorney (SPA) for single proprietorship and Board Resolution or Secretary's Certificate for corporation. The representative must be an employee of the owner (in case of single proprietorship) or company/corporation he/she will be representing.
3. For authentication purposes, original copy of sugar trading license/registration must be presented before the Auction Committee.

The auction sale shall be conducted at the Office of the Provincial Manager, NFA Cotabato Provincial Office, Kidapawan City on the following schedule:

ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Invitation to Bid and Tender Form	August 09-11, 2004	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
2. Pre-Auction Conference	August 13, 2004	9:00 AM
3. Auction Proper	August 13, 2004	10:00 AM

The tender forms may be obtained at NFA Cotabato Provincial Office, Kidapawan City after payment of the non-refundable fee of Php 200.00. For further information, you may inquire with the office of the Provincial Manager, NFA Cotabato Provincial Office, Kidapawan City thru Telephone Nos. 064-278-4268 / 288-1743 or at the NFA Regional Office XII, Tacurong City thru Telephone Nos. 064-200-3803 / 064-384-1247.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECT AND INFORMALITY FOUND THEREIN OR ACCEPT OFFERS WHICH IN ITS JUDGEMENT ARE MOST REASONABLE AND ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **PANGALIAN B. BUSRAN**
Acting Assistant Regional Manager/
RBAC Chairman

(PDI – August 6 & 7, 2004)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF SCRAP / JUNK ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : **August 18, 2004**, 2:00 PM simultaneously at the Aplaya DPP Office, Jasaan, Misamis Oriental Province and at Solarium Multi-Purpose Hall, Ground Floor, Bldg. 1, NPC-Head Office, Agham Rd. corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following unserviceable items:

Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1. One (1) lot: unserviceable and Junk plant parts, Corroded-drums, used magnet / stator wires, Discarded-batteries, junk vehicles, used tires, all located at the Radiator Area, Warehouse, Motor Pool, Tank Farm and Helipad Area of the Aplaya Diesel Power Plant, Jasaan, Misamis Oriental Prov.	P 1,108,000.00 / lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. **PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.**
2. **LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN 2003 ORIGINAL (OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY) FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY. ORIGINALS MUST BE PRESENTED.**

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Materials Management Department, Ground Floor, Building-1, NPC Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. **Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM August 17, 2004.**

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC-MMD

(PDI – August 4, 5 & 6, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Malaybalay City

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Provincial Governor's Office

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Re-advertisement)

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the Province of Bukidnon, invites interested Suppliers, Distributors and Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following projects:

NAME OF PROJECTS	APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT	SOURCE OF FUND
I. DRUGS & MEDICINES	P 2,942,899.00	General Fund & Capitalization
II. MEDICAL AND LAB. SUPPLIES AND REAGENTS	P 2,329,007.80	General Fund & Capitalization
III. HOSPITAL SUPPLIES	P 103,950.00	General Fund

This is for the use of Seven (7) Provincial Hospitals and twenty-two (22) Provincial Health Stations of the Province of Bukidnon. Immediate delivery or a maximum of fifteen (15) working days upon receipt of the purchase order is strictly required. Goods will be delivered at the **Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City.**

Schedule of activities are as follows:

1. July 30 – August 12, 2004 – Period for issuance of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents
2. August 05, 2004 (9:00 am) – Pre-bid conference
3. August 16, 2004 (9:00 am) – Eligibility check
4. August 17, 2004 (9:00 am) – Deadline for the submission of bids
5. August 17, 2004 (10:00 am) – Opening of bids in a sealed envelope

Complete set of eligibility requirements and bid documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat at the Provincial General Services Office, Province of Bukidnon, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P250.00. Duly accomplished eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be submitted in sealed envelope addressed to BAC Chairman c/o BAC Secretariat.

Eligibility requirements of bidders who have declared eligible in the first bidding shall be considered valid and required only to submit two separate sealed envelope containing technical component of the bid and financial component of the bid respectively. The BAC allows partial bids thus awarding of all projects should be in itemize basis.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 1% for cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit, 1.5% for Bank guarantee, and 2.5% for surety bond of the items bided (only Government insurance institution is acceptable for surety bond).

The BAC of the Province of Bukidnon reserves the right to accept or reject all bids thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids or to award any work that is considered most advantageous to the Province of Bukidnon.

(Sgd.) **JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES**
BAC Chairman / Prov'l. Administrator

(PDI – July 30 & August 6, 2004)

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2004

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12:00 noon
Day before publication

Rosalia Gonzales Tayao

Peacefully joined her Creator
on August 3, 2004 at the age of 87.

Her bereaved husband **Col. Ricardo J. Tayao** (†); children **Ricardo Jr.**, **Rebecca**, **Fr. Robert** (†), **Ramona, Ruth, Rizalina** and **Renato**; children-in-law **Dr. Patricia Cruz**, **Bob Baker** and **Mabel Morante**; grandchildren **Carla** and **Jay Crow**, **Celeste** and **Kevin Worth** and **Michael Noel Tayao**; and great grandson **Brandon Worth**, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at 189 Rueda, Plaridel, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 8, 2004 at Rueda Catholic Cemetery after the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

In Loving Memory
On the 25th Death Anniversary of

TERESA NOBLE CABRERA-ARGUELLES

(October 15, 1907 - August 3, 1979)

We, her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren

Joey & Tessie (Marites, Joy & Ronnie {Rachelle, Reuben, Ralph, Ruth & Raymond}, Mary Anne, Joselito & Rachell {Rafael, Miguel} Charisse),
Archbishop Ramon, Elsie & Pablito Rabago (Bong & Riza, Sr. Ma. Lisette, Mges, Charina & Rogelio {Mariel Therese & Marinelli Celine} Paolo Don, Joseph Rensis)
Baby and **Joey Soriano** (Jaymee, Michelle & Tin-tin)

request relatives, friends & pious readers to continue to remember our Mama in their prayers.

A special Mass will be offered for her and for our Papa on August 7, 2004 at the Chapel of the Lipa Archbishop's Residence, San Lorenzo St., Lipa City at 1500 H.

We never cease to thank God and Mama Mary for you, Mama.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring..,
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate

❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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EUGENIA "Nani" ZABALLERO LUNA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on August 4, 2004 at the age of 80.

Her children **Bong** (†), **Butch, Teny, Ana, Dodong, Loli** & **Bok** and **Cesar** and **Tuttay**; her grandchildren **Boogie** & **Nini, Ting, Sachie** & **Raffy, Crystal, Datu, Dido, Ia, China** and **Julio**; and her great-grandsons **Miggoy, Zeke** and **Adrian** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, August 8, 2004 at 11:00 a.m., La Funeraria Paz Crematory, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Our Dearly Beloved

PROF. TEODULA K. AFRICA REYES

Peacefully joined her Creator
on August 2, 2004.

Her family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to please pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the **Lipa City Cathedral**. Mass will be celebrated at said Cathedral at 2:00 p.m., **August 6, 2004** followed by Interment at the **Lipa City Catholic Cemetery**.

LORETO (Nene) PAGSUYUIN FLORES

February 18, 1928 – August 4, 2004

Nene Flores passed away at the age of 76. Her bereaved children **Efren & Cristy, Loida, Tito & Emma, Elmer & Babette**; grandchildren **Caroline & Neil, Catherine & Mike, Richard & Francis, Matthew & Kenneth**; and great-grandson **Zachary Austill** request the pious readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (besides Claret School), Mahinhin Street, U.P. Village, Quezon City.

Interment will be on August 6, 2004 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque after the 12:00 noon Mass at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.

Death Notices

Engr. Rodolfo Felipe Almario

His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Consolation Parish Church in Tierra Pura Subdivision, Tandang Sora, QC.

Interment will take place on Monday, August 09, at the Himlayang Pilipino Cemetery in Tandang Sora.

—— oOo ——

Perla Hizon-Cruz

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City and will be brought to Pulilan, Bulacan on August 8, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. for a one-hour viewing at the Chapel of San Francisco de Asis.

Final interment will be at the Municipal Cemetery of Pulilan, Bulacan.

—— oOo ——

Atty. Jesus R. Cornago
Director and Legal Counsel

Died on August 3, 2004

His mortal remains lie in state at the Our Lady of Peace Memorial Chapel, Antipolo City

CARMEN PEREZ MORALES

of San Fernando, Pampanga and Las Piñas City

Peacefully joined her Creator
on Wednesday, 4th of August 2004 at the age of 76.

Her beloved husband **Marcial M. Morales Sr.** (†); children **Gus, Zeny** and **Boni** (†), **Mars** and **Babs, Esto** and **Belle, Gang** and **Dei** (†), **Tom, Nel** and **Edward**; and all her grandchildren **Paul, Karen, Katrina, Peter, Mark, Dette, Gian, Michael, Michelle, Paolo, Francis** and **Anton**, request fervent prayers and special petitions for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz-Sucat, Parañaque. Interment will be on Sunday, 8th of August 2004 at the Manila Memorial Park-Sucat, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon him
May he rest in peace. Amen.

JESUS P. VELASQUEZ

of Sta. Ana, Manila and Flemington, New Jersey (USA)

Peacefully joined his Creator
on August 3, 2004 at the age of 70.

His bereaved wife, **PRIMA LIRIO VELASQUEZ**; children **JAIME, ANNIE & JOUEL**; children-in-law **PAZ, TONY & KAREN**; grandchildren **MATTHEW, NICHOLAS & AIDAN**; brothers **BENNY, RODY, RICO & REY**; sisters **METRING, AIDA & EVELYN**; brothers and sisters-in-law; nephews and nieces request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Holcombe-Fisher Funeral Home in Flemington, New Jersey.

Cremation will be on Saturday, August 7, 2004 after the 10:00 a.m. mass at the St. Magdalen Church. Entombment will be at the St. Magdalen Mausoleum at a later date.

DR. JOSE ALVIZ LANSANG, SR.

Peacefully joined his Creator on August 4, 2004 at the age of 84.

His loving wife **Esperanza**; children **Cristina & Rodelio, Jose Jr. & Clarina, Ma. Teresa & Jesus, Ma. Elizabeth & Brian**, and **Martin & Joy**; grandchildren **Christian, Martin, Joanna, Enrique, Joaquin, Jose Carlos, Gabriel, Raphael, Patricia, Miguel, Kimberly, Valerie & Craig** and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Mount Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City.

Cremation will take place on Sunday, August 8, 2004 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Holy Family Chapel, Mount Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City.

NENILDA "NELLY" ARGUIDAS RAMILO

of Dayap, Calauan, Laguna & West Triangle, Q.C.

Peacefully joined her Creator on August 4, 2004
at the age of 69.

She will be missed by her husband, **Felix/Narding** of Tanauan, Batangas, daughter and son-in-law **Tes & Monching Romano**, brothers & sisters, in-laws, friends and relatives.

Her remains lie in state at Luna Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will follow after the 8:30 a.m. service on Saturday, August 7, at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."

— Psalm 21:15

'Pets in Style'

FESTIVAL Supermall presents fashionable and talented dogs in its annual "Pets in Style", a fashion show and competition for canine companions on Aug. 8, 3 p.m., at the mall's Carousel Court, Level 2. The competition is divided into medium-large and toy-small breed categories. Cash prizes, starting at P10,000 for the grand prize of each category, and trophies await winners. Pet owners can sign up at the customer service counter together with a minimum purchase worth P500 (single or accumulated receipt) from any shop of the mall. Registration is ongoing until 2 p.m. of Aug. 8. Winning pets will be chosen based on costume coordination, creativity, originality, showmanship, and audience impact. For more information, call 850-3514.

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2 **COLLATERAL** FS: 11:20, 2:00 pm, 4:40 pm, 7:20 pm, LMF: 10:00 pm (R-13)

3 **CATWOMAN** FS: 12:50 pm, 3:05 pm, 5:20 pm, 7:35 pm, LMF: 9:50 pm (GP)

4

PREMIERE THEATRE

COLLATERAL FS: 10:45 , 1:25 pm, 4:05 pm, 6:45 pm, LMF: 9:25 pm (R-13)

For more information please call 633-7851 loc. 169 to 172

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

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GUARANTEED SEATS

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 **COLLATERAL** 1:25, 4:10, 6:55, 10:00 R-13

2 **COLLATERAL** 11:00, 1:55, 4:45, 7:25, 10:20 R-13

3 **GARFIELD** 11:05, 1:15, 3:25 5:35, 7:45, 10:00 GP

4 **CATWOMAN** 11:45, 2:25, 4:55, 7:30, 10:30 GP

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ETERNAL SUNSHINE R13 12:50,3:05,5:20,7:35,9:50	**GARFIELD** GP 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50,10:00	**GARFIELD** GP 12:50,3:00,5:10,7:20,9:30
COLLATERAL R13 1:35,4:10,6:45,9:20	**CATWOMAN** GP 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	**COLLATERAL** R13 12:10,2:45,5:20,7:55,10:30

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CINEMA 2 **GARFIELD** 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 10:00 GP

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Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

3 DD Dolby COLLATERAL 10:00 am 12:40 pm 3:25 pm 6:10 pm 8:55 pm

4 DIGITAL GARFIELD 12:25 pm 2:35 pm 4:45 pm 6:55 pm 9:05 pm

5 CATWOMAN 12:00 nn 2:15 pm 4:30 pm 6:45 pm 9:00 pm

6 DD Dolby ETERNAL SUNSHINE 11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm

7 DD Dolby DEAD PEOPLE 11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm

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Aug 13 NIGHT OF THE CHAMPIONS THE REPEAT

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF BROCOLI F

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MAKAMUNDO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	MAKAMUNDO
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1, 2, & 3	GARFIELD / COLLATERAL / CATWOMAN
PREMIERE THEATRE	COLLATERAL

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	GHOST HOUSE (RE-ISSUE)
CINEMA-2	PERLAS
CINEMA-3	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	PRINCE & ME
CINEMA-6	KILL BILL VOL 2
CINEMA-7	WEREWOLF
CINEMA-8	LIBERATED 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-12	KING ARTHUR
CINEMA-14	ALONG CAME POLLY
CINEMA-15	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-1	LADY KILLERS
CINEMA-2	I ROBOT
CINEMA-4	RESERVED

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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CINEMA 1 THX — COLLATERAL

2 COLLATERAL	3 IMELDA 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00	4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
5 GARFIELD 11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00	6 CATWOMAN 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	7 DEAD PEOPLE 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8 ELLA ENCHANTED 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40	9 I, ROBOT 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00	10 ALONG CAME POLLY 10:00, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P150 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 COLLATERAL

2 GARFIELD 10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:05	3 CATWOMAN 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50	4 MAKAMUNDO 11:15, 1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40
5 DEAD PEOPLE 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50	6 COLLATERAL	7 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 10:20, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 COLLATERAL	2 GARFIELD 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 8:50, 10:35

3 CATWOMAN 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 10:35	4 ELLA ENCHANTED 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00	5 DEAD PEOPLE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 11:10, 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10	7 I, ROBOT 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 9:00	8 COLLATERAL

NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

1 GARFIELD 10:30, 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:35	2 CATWOMAN 10:15, 12:45, 3:15, 5:45, 8:30

3 I, ROBOT 12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30	4 ALONG CAME POLLY 10:50, 12:50, 2:45, 4:40, 6:35, 8:30	5 COLLATERAL
6 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 11:00, 12:55, 2:50, 4:45, 6:40, 8:35	7 KING ARTHUR 11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40	8 MAKAMUNDO 11:00, 1:20, 3:40, 6:20, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575

1 COLLATERAL
2 CATWOMAN
3 GARFIELD
4 MAKAMUNDO

CAINTA 240-4661

1 CATWOMAN
2 MAKAMUNDO
3 COLLATERAL
4 I, ROBOT

STA. ROSA (049)837-0907

1 COLLATERAL
2 IMELDA
3 ALONG CAME POLLY
4 PERLAS
5 CATWOMAN

LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870

1 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
2 CATWOMAN
3 ALONG CAME POLLY
4 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
5 KING ARTHUR

DASMARIÑAS 852-2125 / 416-4332

1 COLLATERAL
2 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
3 I, ROBOT
4 GARFIELD
5 CATWOMAN

STARMILLS San Fernando, Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270

1 WEREWOLF
2 KAINAN SA HIGHWAY
3 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
4 ELLA ENCHANTED
5 GARFIELD
6 CATWOMAN

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858

1 WEREWOLF
2 GARFIELD
3 MAKAMUNDO
4 COLLATERAL
5 CATWOMAN
6 CATWOMAN

BACOLOD 441-0458/59

1 CATWOMAN
2 ELLA ENCHANTED
3 COLLATERAL
4 KING ARTHUR
5 EVE
6 LIBERATED 2

ILOILO 336-8070/78

1 CATWOMAN
2 KING ARTHUR
3 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
4 COLLATERAL
5 WEREWOLF
6 BEAUTIFUL LIFE

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4 IT giants gather at retailers summit

FOUR of the biggest and most prominent information technology (IT) companies will participate in this year's biggest retailers event as the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA), the national organization of retailers in the country, stages the 13th National Retailers Conference and Stores Asia Expo (13th NRCE) 2004 from Aug. 11 to 13 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City.

With a record-breaking NRCE the previous year, which saw the attendance of over 700 major retailers and top level retail executives, the four global IT giants namely IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, and Epson will discuss and showcase the latest IT strategies and solutions to boost the retail industry.

IBM Corp's consulting marketing manager Daniel Hopping from the United States will present "The Next Generation Store: Global Trends in Retailing" where he will share some of the emerging technologies that are taking shape and how they will effect the retailer and the entire distribution industry five to 10 years from now.

Oracle's senior product manager for process supply chain solutions Ernesto Jose Bilar will discuss "Supercharging the Value Chain" to help retailers cope with the challenges of managing an increasingly complex supply network and the fierce competition posed by superretailers through the following initiatives: attracting and retaining targeted customers; driving efficient forecasting, planning and procurement; streamlining logistics operations; increasing employee empowerment and productivity and optimizing facilities and the real estate investment.

Meanwhile, Microsoft Philippines will tackle the topic "CRM-Tool for Retail Productivity" and how retailers can profit from this technology.

Epson Philippines, on the other hand, will showcase its wide range of printers at the Stores Asia Expo 2004.

This year's NRCE, which is supported by IBM Philippines, Microsoft, Oracle Philippines, PLDT Business Solutions, Epson Philippines, GlobeQUEST, Araneta Center, Ayala Center, Robinsons Malls, SM Shoemart, Montanara, Oxygen, San Miguel Corp, Wyeth Philippines, HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives, Shangri-La Plaza Corp, Bench, Microwarehouse, GMA-7, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Mellow Touch 94.7 and MasterCard International, with the theme "In Search of Retailing Excellence," will tackle retailing in today's hyper competitive environment, which has become more and more challenging with retailers besieged on all sides by conflict. It is no longer enough to be "good" at certain areas of your business and other backroom functions. In today's complex marketplace, excellence is the order of the day. In short, one must make the leap from good to great to continue to thrive in today's business battlefield.

Aside from the power-packed topics mentioned, this year's program will also feature "The Philippine Retailing Industry"; "Practical & Cost Effective Market Research on a Budget"; "Winning Trends in Advertising & Promotions"; "Strategic Financing for SMEs"; "ShopperTrends: Understanding Consumers' Habits"; "Branding Strategies for Retailers"; "If You Don't Measure It, You Can't Manage It: Retail Metrics that Matter," "The Battle for the Customer's Share of Life" and "Success Stories on Retail Entrepreneurship."

The event is also supported by Adman Resources, Adidas Philippines, All Visual & Lights Systems, Celine Marketing, Colgate-Palmolive Philippines, Criterion, GMP Philippines, Greenhills Shopping Center, Kimberly-Clark Philippines, Nestle Philippines, Procter & Gamble Philippines, Ramon Favila Apparel, Rusty Lopez, Shopwise Inc, Sportshouse, Speed Printing Corp, Sterling Notebook, Spark Graphics, Bayo and Jollibee Foods Corp.

For more info, call the PRA executive secretariat at 687-4985/4180/4181 or e-mail pra@nwave.net.

'THE PACMAN' JOINS THE EMPOWER FAMILY

Manny 'The Pacman' Pacquiao (3rd from right) has recently joined Empower as the company's product endorser. Empower is a 100-percent Filipino company engaged in the production and distribution of high-quality herbal products. The signing of Manny is in line with its faith in the ability of Filipinos to excel. For his part, Manny believes that aside from its products, Empower provides people with the opportunity to earn more. Empower is represented by (from left): Malou B. dela Cruz, vice president for sales and business development; Josephine G. Elicaño, senior vice president; and Josefina M. Elicaño, president and chief operating officer. Manny is joined by wife Jinkee and his friend and trainer Buboy Fernandez.

MOLECULES VISITS TARLAC

Kristopher Peralta and Hazel Ann Mendoza, celebrity endorsers of Molecules and Particles, respectively, recently visited J-Mart Department Store in Tarlac City. Shown are storeowner JR Lim and Tita Aban, department head, with the celebrities.

Unhealthy lifestyle can cause premature death

OVER the next years, unhealthy lifestyle will be one of the leading causes of premature deaths especially among Americans, a study says.

Results of the study, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, showed that unhealthy habits such as smoking, poor diet and physical inactivity accounts for 39 percent of deaths in the United States. According to James Marks, one of the researchers of the study, these practices will be the leading cause of death if people don't modify their lifestyle.

The situation in the Philippines is not different from the United States. Why? Filipinos have embraced Western culture and they just love to imitate the American lifestyle.

Dr. Joy Fontanilla, an endocrinology consultant at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center, said "urbanization has led to a culture of 'overeating and underexercising' and hence, a ballooning epidemic of obesity."

"Excessive calorie intake, coupled with couch-potato lifestyle may result in obesity and diabetes. Genetic predisposition is another factor that can lead to type 2 diabetes," she said.

Diabetes is a chronic, progressive disease, associated with high levels of glucose in the bloodstream (hyperglycemia). It is a disease with serious complications such as damage to the eyes, limbs, kidney and heart.

It is indeed good news that effective treatment modalities are now available for the management of diabetes, like a combination therapy. According to Fontanilla, in the old days, management of diabetes was limited to insulin and oral medications such as the sulfonylureas. "Sulfonylureas cause your pancreas to secrete more insulin. Eventually, since diabetes is a progressive disease, the pancreas gets exhausted and can no longer produce insulin. By that time, sulfonylureas would no longer be effective. You would be left with insulin as the only alternative treatment," she said.

In the last decade, more medications to combat diabetes have become available. The development of a two-in-one drug-combining rosiglitazone, which saves the pancreas from expiration, and metformin-which helps prevent the liver from putting out too much sugar-is a boon.

"These medications can complement each other. When given together, they can produce greater reductions in blood sugar than when given alone," said Fontanilla.

The combination of rosiglitazone and metformin has been proven in several clinical trials. The Empire (Escalation of Metformin versus the Initiation of Rosiglitazone Early) study showed that more patients reached their targeted blood sugar levels with the early addition of rosiglitazone to metformin than those who are receiving the maximum dose of metformin alone.

Together with diet and exercise, combination therapy will greatly help patients in achieving their target blood sugar levels. But most importantly, combination therapy will help them to avoid the serious complications that come with the disease. Patients with type 2 diabetes should consult their doctors to learn more about new treatments that could potentially put a stop to the progression of their disease.

More PEP on B9, B11

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region Office 10
Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City

NOTICE OF RAW SUGAR "B" AUCTION

The National Food Authority, Region Office 10, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City invites all interested licensed sugar traders, industrial users and other interested buyers to participate and tender offers in the auction for the whole lot of 102,615.35 Lkg. Raw Sugar "B" or Domestic Sugar located at the following sugar mill:

LOT	PROVINCE	SUGAR MILL	QUANTITY (In Lkg)	INDICATIVE PRICE (P/Lkg)
1	Bukidnon	Crystal Milling Corporation	102,615.35	P760.00

The sale shall be for the total volume on an "as-is-where-is" and no selection basis.

All interested ollerors are required to post a Bid Bond equivalent to 10% of the total amount offered in the form of Cash or PNB Demand Draft payable to NFA.

Only prospective bidders who have submitted the following requirements to the Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC) prior to Auction proper are qualified to participate.

1. Original and one (1) certified photocopy of Sugar Trading License/DTI Registration/Mayor's Permit.
2. Original and one (1) certified photocopy of SEC/CDA Registration for partnership/cooperative.
3. Duly notarized Special Power of Attorney from the sole proprietor or Board Resolution from the Secretary/Chairman certifying that the representative is presently connected with the entity as an official/employee/stockholder and is authorized to represent the same in the Auction and all activities pertinent therein.

The auction shall be conducted at the NFA-10 Regional Office Conference Room, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City on the following schedule:

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME
Submission of Requirements	Aug. 12, 2004	8:30-10:00 A.M.
Pre-Auction Conference	Aug. 12, 2004	10:00 AM

Auction Proper will follow after the Pre-Auction Conference

The auction terms and conditions and tender forms can be secured from the RBAC Secretariat at NFA-10; Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City after payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of P500.00.

The NFA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept only such bids which in its judgement are deemed most reasonable and advantageous to the NFA.

For more details, please contact the RBAC Secretariat Head, Ms. Emma P. Asiñero at Telephone Nos. (088-22) 732215 and (088)-8552721.

(Sgd.) CAMILO D. MAGTRAYO
Asst. Regional Director /
RBAC-NORMIN Chairman

(PDI – August 6 & 8, 2004)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
NPC-LOGMMSD2004-005

The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the:

Project No.: LOGMMSD2004-005 LEASING OF ONE HUNDRED TEN (110) UNITS OF BRAND NEW DESKTOP AND NOTEBOOK COMPUTERS WITH AN OPTION TO PURCHASE THE LEASED EQUIPMENT.

Requirements		Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
Brand New Notebook Computers	4	P9,108,000.00 (contract cost for three (3) years)
Brand New Desktop Computers	106	
Total No. of Units	**110**	**P 253,000.00** (contract cost per month
Acceptable Brands: IBM, HP-Compaq, Dell, Fujitsu		

Application for eligibility and to bid is open to all interested parties who are:

a. Actively registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and/or Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
b. Duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), in case of Cooperatives;
c. Duly licensed Filipino citizens / sole proprietorships;
d. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
e. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
f. Entities forming themselves into a joint venture that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for this particular contract provided, however that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least 60%).

The value of the prospective bidder's largest single contract, adjusted to current prices, completed within the last five (5) years immediately preceding the eligibility screening, and similar to the contract to be bid, must be at least 50% of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

Contract duration is for three (3) years unless sooner terminated.

Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents shall be from July 30 to August 10, 2004, 8:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. at the Materials Management Services Division (MMSD), MMD Ground Floor Bldg., National Power Corporation, Diliman, Quezon City upon submission of:

1) An application addressed to THE CHAIRMAN, Bids and Awards Committee;
2) Certified true copy of Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate;
3) Payment of non-refundable fee of One Thousand (Php 1,000.00)

All additional information shall be furnished upon request at MMSD with tel. no. (02) 924-5477.

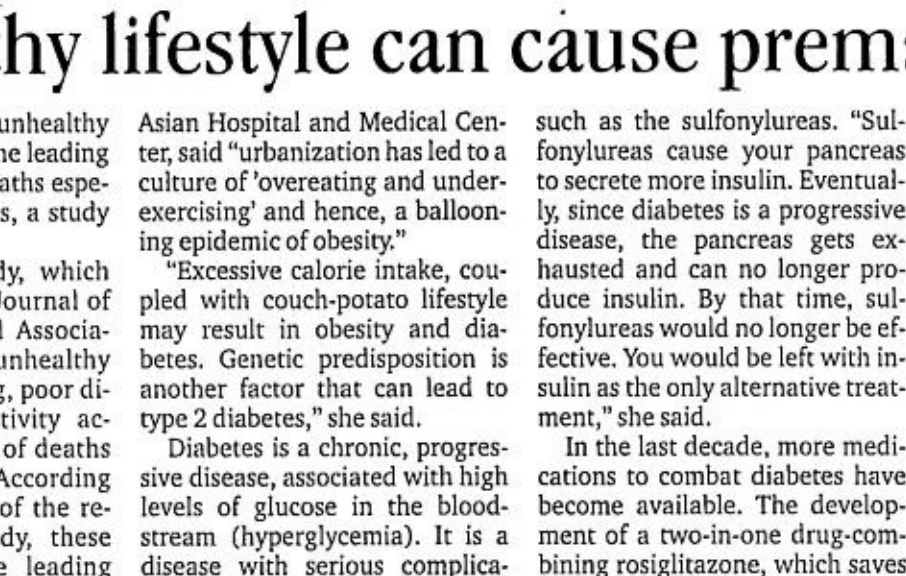
Pre-Bid Conference will be on August 11, 2004, 3:00 P.M. at Peñafrancia Function Room, NPC Bldg. I, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline for Submission and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Proposals shall be on August 23, 2004, 2:00 P.M. at Kañao Function Room at the above mentioned address.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of Republic Act No. 9184.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) LORENZO S. MARCELO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD/MMD

(PDI – July 30 & August 6, 2004)



31 YEARS IN MOTORBIKES

Manila Imperial Motor Sales is a family corporation established in 1973. The company first began as a direct importer of motorcycle parts. In 1993, the company diversified to a new market, the motorcycle industry. At present, the company carries various brands such as the Ultima, Kawasaki, Yamaha, Suzuki, Lifan, Sym and other Chinese branded motorcycles. The company is also engaged in selling motorcycles in the form of cash installments to its customers. Terms ranging from 12 months, 18 months, 24 months and 36 months are being offered. The company also enjoys a provincial network, with branches as far as Baliuag, Bulacan in the north and Binan and Cabuyao, Laguna in the south. Manila Imperial is located at 527 Ilang Ilang Street, Binondo, Manila. For more inquiries, call 242-2795, 242-2761 or 242-2764.

MARKETING AGREEMENT

Philippines-Korea Asia International Corp (PK Asia International) and Hankuk Fiber Glass Co Ltd recently signed a memorandum of agreement for the exclusive marketing and distribution of Glass-Fiber Reinforced Plastic Pipes (GRP) and other products in the Philippines and the Southeast Asian region. Hankuk Fiber Glass Co Ltd, a member of Hankuk Fiber Glass Group of Korea, manufactures GRPs widely used in water distribution and sanitary sewers. Shown during the signing ceremony (from left) are Kang, Hong-Su, chief manager of the pipe department, Hankuk Fiber Glass Co Ltd, Jang, Yeong-Sik, director, PK Asia International, Rae-Gyu Leem, PhD, vice chair, Hankuk Fiber Glass Co Ltd, Esmeralito Marcos, president, PK Asia International, Lee, Yong-Woon, chair, PK Asia International, and Lee, Boung-Woo, vice president for external affairs, PK Asia International.

'NO TEACHER LEFT BEHIND'

Public school teachers attend a hands-on session on Microsoft technologies as part of the first Boot Camp for Microsoft Philippines' 'No Teacher Left Behind' program held in the Manolo Lopez Development Center, Antipolo. Around 40 teachers participated in this activity. In partnership with over 140 colleges and universities and the Department of Education, Microsoft Philippines' 'No Teacher Left Behind' trains thousands of public school teachers nationwide on basic ICT literacy, desktop productivity and software development beginning this month.

CELF LF forum

THE COALITION to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (CELF) will hold a forum on Aug. 10 to discuss and rally support for its campaign to eradicate lymphatic filariasis (LF) in the country by 2010.

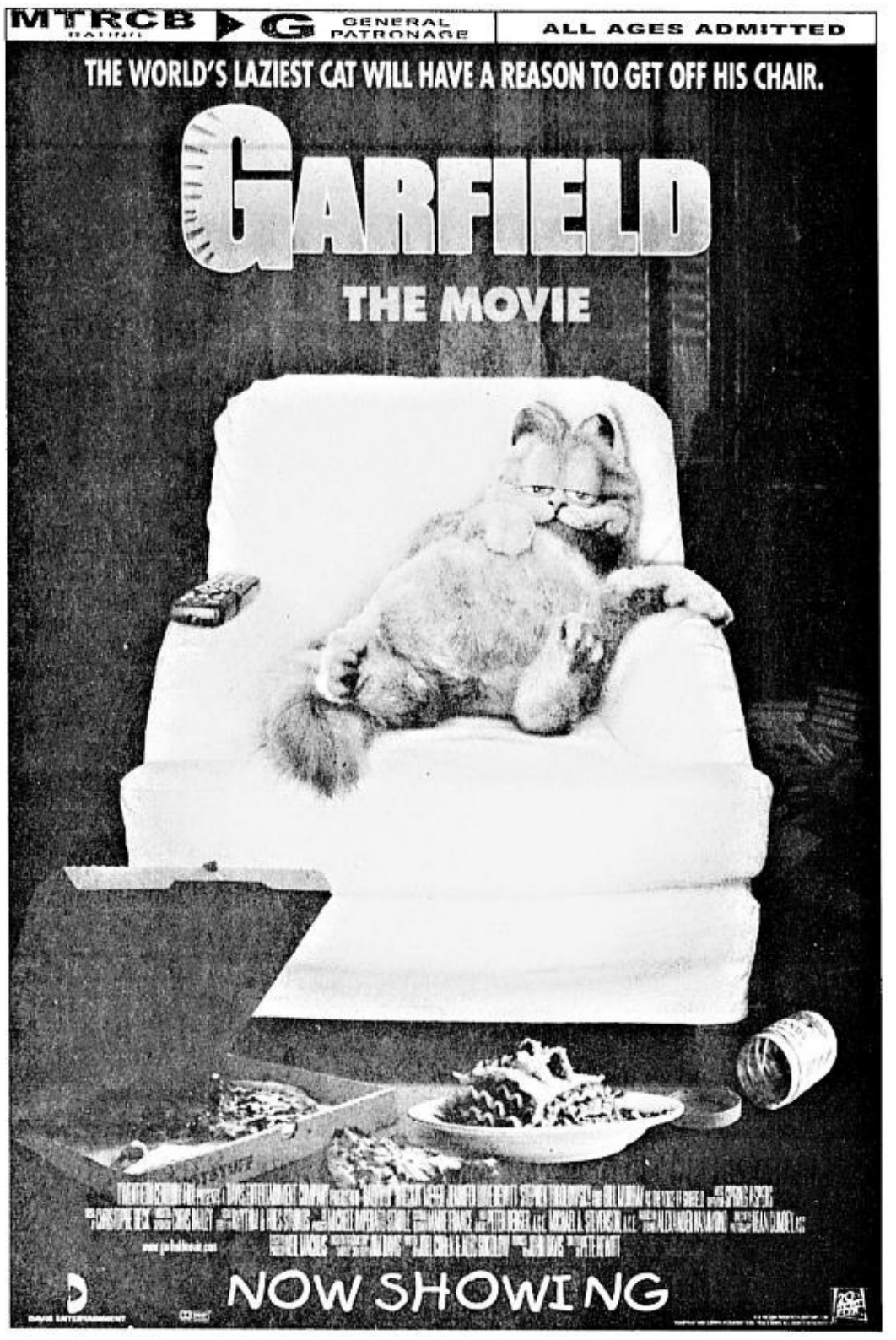
LF is a mosquito-borne disease that is the 2nd leading cause of disability in the country and is endemic in 36 RP provinces. CELF, a multi-sector alliance of public health advocates, invites non-government organizations, civic groups and people's organizations undertaking health and developmental work to attend the forum at the National Disaster Coordinating Council conference room, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City starting 9 a.m.

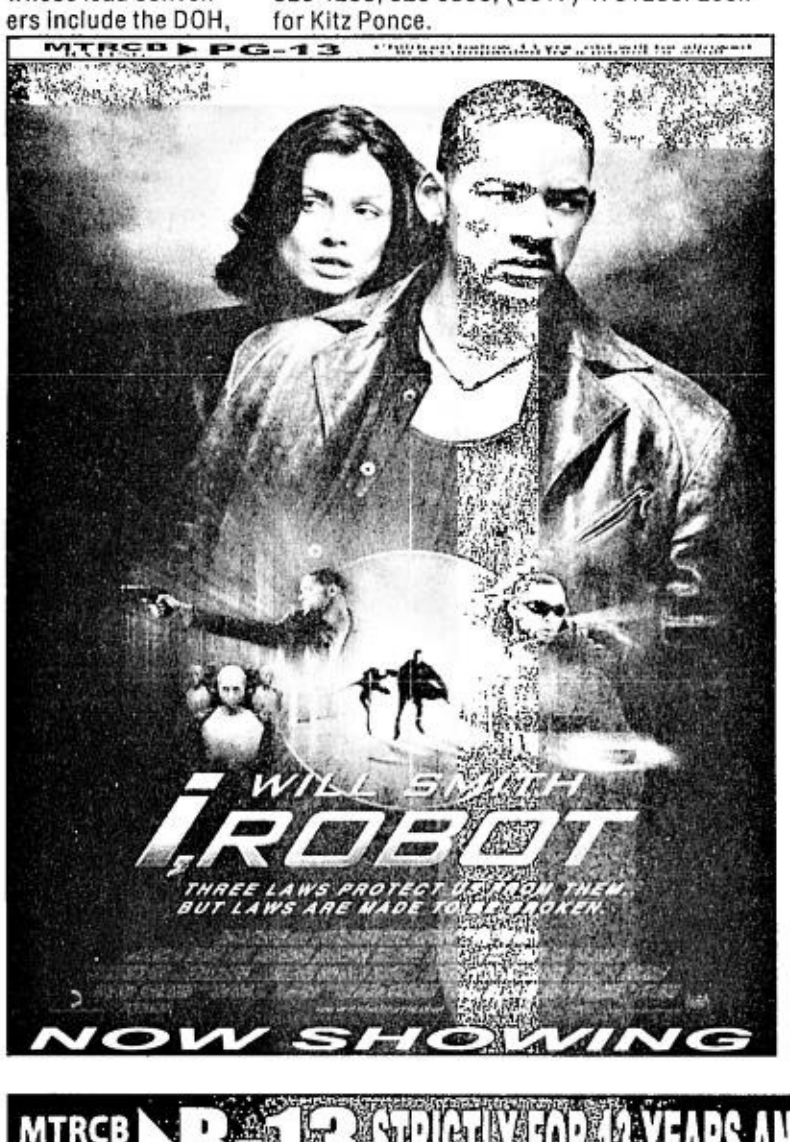
Topping the forum's agenda is the social mobilization and resource generation for mass drug administrations by the Department of Health this November in 9 RP provinces.

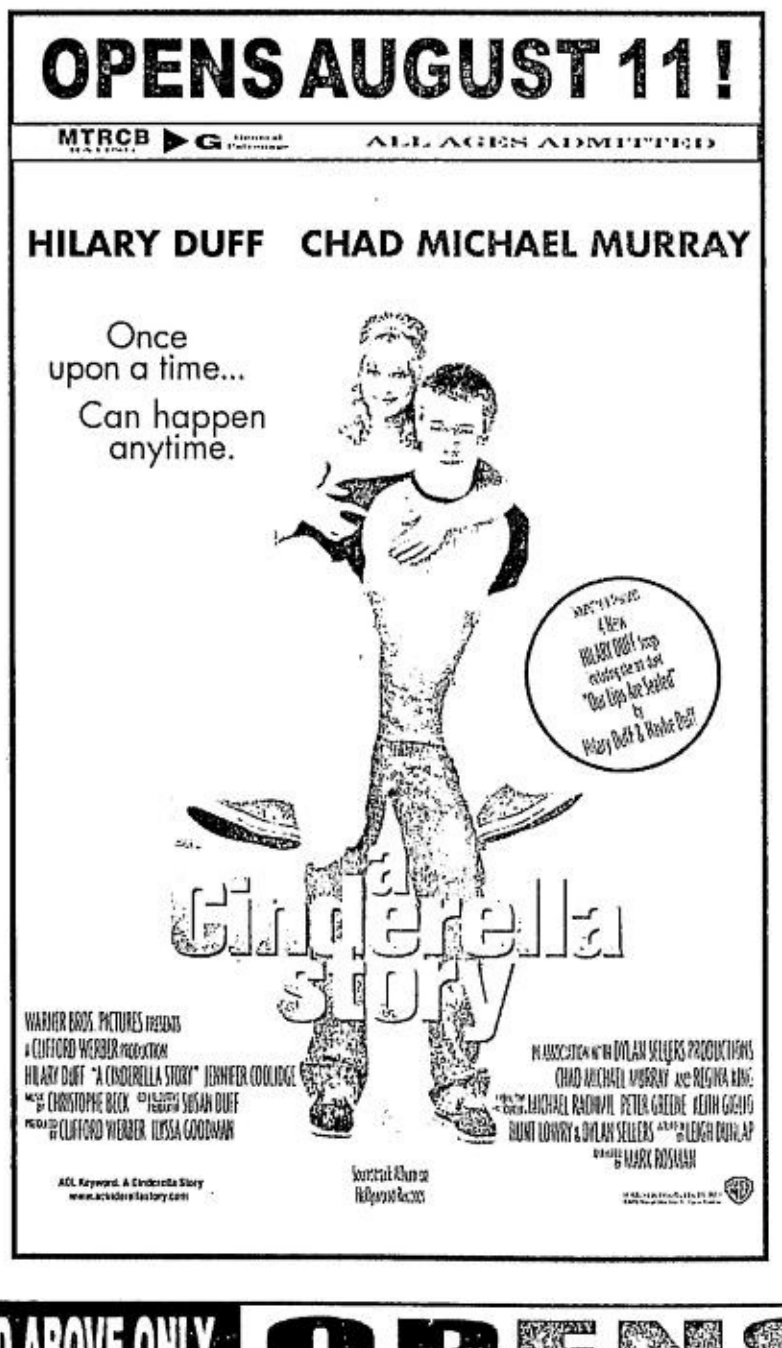
The campaign is part of a global effort to eradicate what leading health authorities have dubbed an "orphaned" disease. Pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline has globally committed to donate albendazole tablets, one half of the anti-LF combination therapy, until 2020 or until the disease is eliminated.

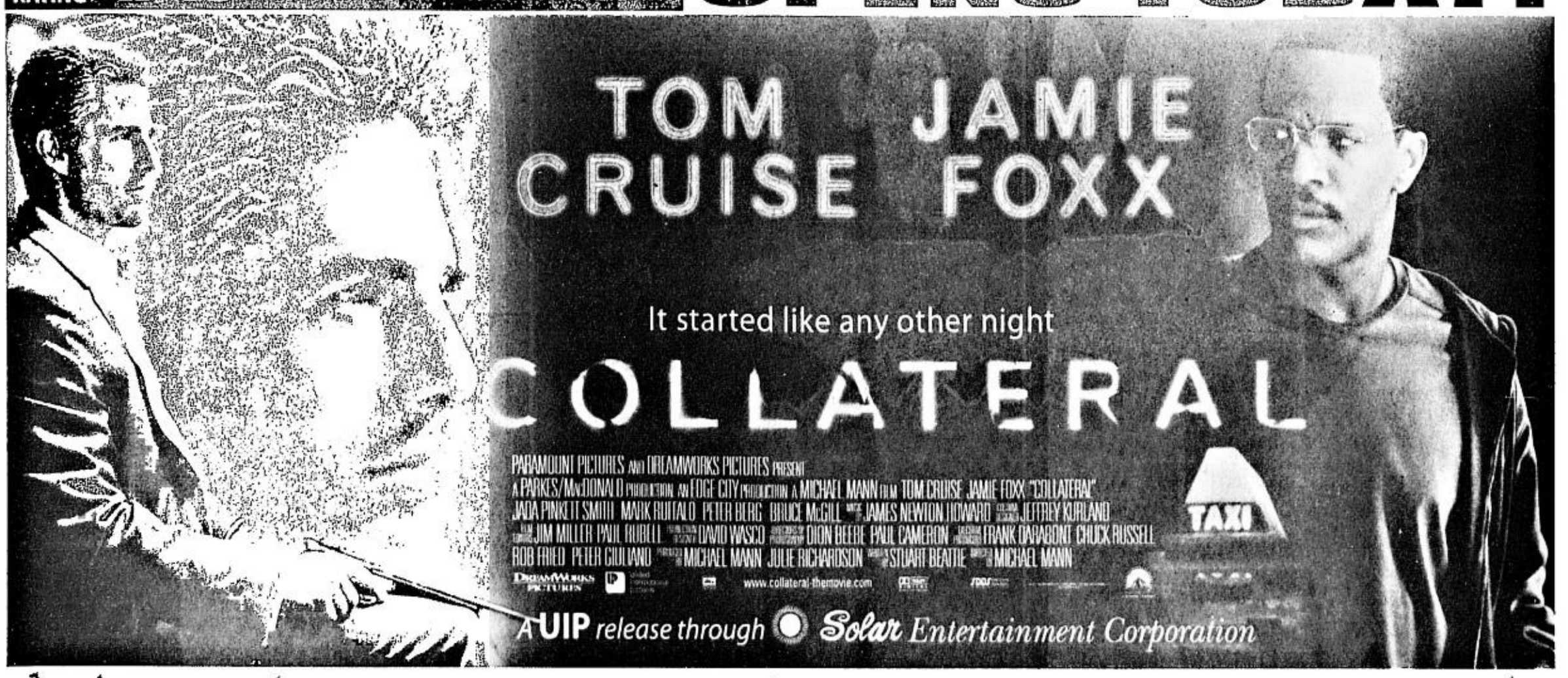
CELF Philippines, whose lead conveners include the DOH, World Health Organization and the University of the Philippines National Institute for Health, have also set round tables with other government agencies, private companies and business groups, and media.

For inquiries, call the CELF secretariat at 526 4266; 525 0395; (0917) 4791230. Look for Kitz Ponce.









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BUSINESS

Finance to press for 10% tax amnesty

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is pushing for a 10-percent amnesty tax, in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's tax proposal, to encourage tax-delinquent and underground businesses to go mainstream.

Under the government's tax amnesty proposal, individuals and companies that have been remiss in paying proper taxes will be given the chance to come clean by making them immune from penalties. Their tax liabilities may also be condoned in exchange for making them pay only an amnesty tax, which will carry a substantially minimal rate.

The DOF wants the amnesty tax to be set at 10 percent of the increase in one's net worth from a base year to another. A 10-percent rate for the amnesty tax is a practical solution that will attract amnesty applicants and, at the same time, generate substantial revenue for the government, the DOF said.

The DOF tax amnesty proposal is different from the tax amnesty bill Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez recently filed in Congress. The DOF hopes that its inputs on the tax amnesty will be considered by Congress before the body moves to pass the bill.

QUEZON Rep. Danilo Suarez wants tax amnesty set at 2 to 3 percent.

In his bill, Suarez proposed that the amnesty tax be set at 2 to 3 percent of an amnesty applicant's net worth as of end-2003. The figures are way below the DOF proposal of 10 percent.

Earlier, the DOF said it would be more equitable if the computation of the tax amnesty would be based on the increase in one's net worth from one period to another, rather than base it on one's accumulated net worth as of a given period, or 2003.

Finance Undersecretary Grace Tan explained that taxpayers sometimes would want to amend their previously filed statement of assets and liabilities (SALs) to include assets that were not yet declared, and that could be subject for tax amnesty.

She said that the basis for the computation of amnesty tax should be the increase in one's net worth from one period to another, say from 2000 to 2003, so that possible changes in one's net worth would be incorporated.

The DOF also explained that net worth as of a given period, is the amount of cumulative inflow of wealth, diminished by liabilities over the years. Net worth, unlike increase in net worth, therefore includes incomes from previous years that have already been taxed and should not be taxed anymore.

Instead of the 2 to 3-percent amnesty tax on one's net worth as Suarez proposed, the DOF said it would be better that the amnesty tax be pegged at 10 percent of one's increase in net worth, Tan said.

"Tax amnesty is intended to broaden the tax base," the finance undersecretary said. "We really want to give them (delinquent taxpayers) the opportunity to make them come clean."

The DOF likewise recommended that the amnesty tax should not be used to spare a delinquent taxpayer from the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

"The graft and corrupt practices is not, in essence, the non-payment of tax; it is the procurement/receipt of economic value or personal gain using the influence or power of public office," the DOF said in a position paper.

Under the tax amnesty proposal, the taxpayer shall be immune from civil and criminal penalties under the Tax Code, from the Revised Penal Code, and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

The tax amnesty is one of President Arroyo's revenue-enhancement measures intended to help government address its budget deficit, which is expected to hit P197.8 billion by year-end.

The DOF estimates that the tax amnesty proposal would contribute P25 billion to government coffers.

RP, G-33 push agri measures in WTO talks

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GROUP of 33 led by the Philippines and Indonesia will continue pushing for special safeguard mechanisms (SSMs) for agricultural commodities in the next round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations.

Fresh from its landmark gains at the recent round of WTO talks, the Philippines and the rest of G-33, which is made up of developing countries, will focus on the SSM and "special products" in the next round of negotiations in September, according to Segfredo Serrano, Agriculture assistant secretary and head of the Philippine delegation in the recent WTO talks.

The next step for developing countries is to demand that SSMs be used exclusively by developing member-countries, and not by developed countries, Serrano said yesterday during an interview.

Serrano noted that the SSMs have to be more relevant to developing countries because they are more susceptible to inflation adjustments and fluctuations in foreign exchange rates.

He said that often, developing countries would have no choice but to absorb these unfavorable adjustments and be forced to price their export products at below production costs just to keep their market share.

"We also want to establish a new base period for pricing because we are still using 1986 to 1988 as the benchmark which is already ridiculous," Serrano said. "Those prices are very remote from existing realities and have not benefited developing countries."

In the last round of WTO talks that ended on July 31, RP and the rest of G-33 won favorable concessions. The developed nations also agreed to the G-33's demand to bring down trade-distorting farm subsidies.

Telcos exempted from paying local franchise tax

THE COURT of Appeals (CA) has upheld a lower court decision declaring Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel) exempt from payment of local franchise taxes.

In a recent ruling, the CA summarily dismissed the appeal filed by the Makati City government seeking a reversal of the judgment of the Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC)-Branch 148 dated Dec. 10, 2002, which directed Makati City to stop assessing and collecting local franchise tax from Piltel.

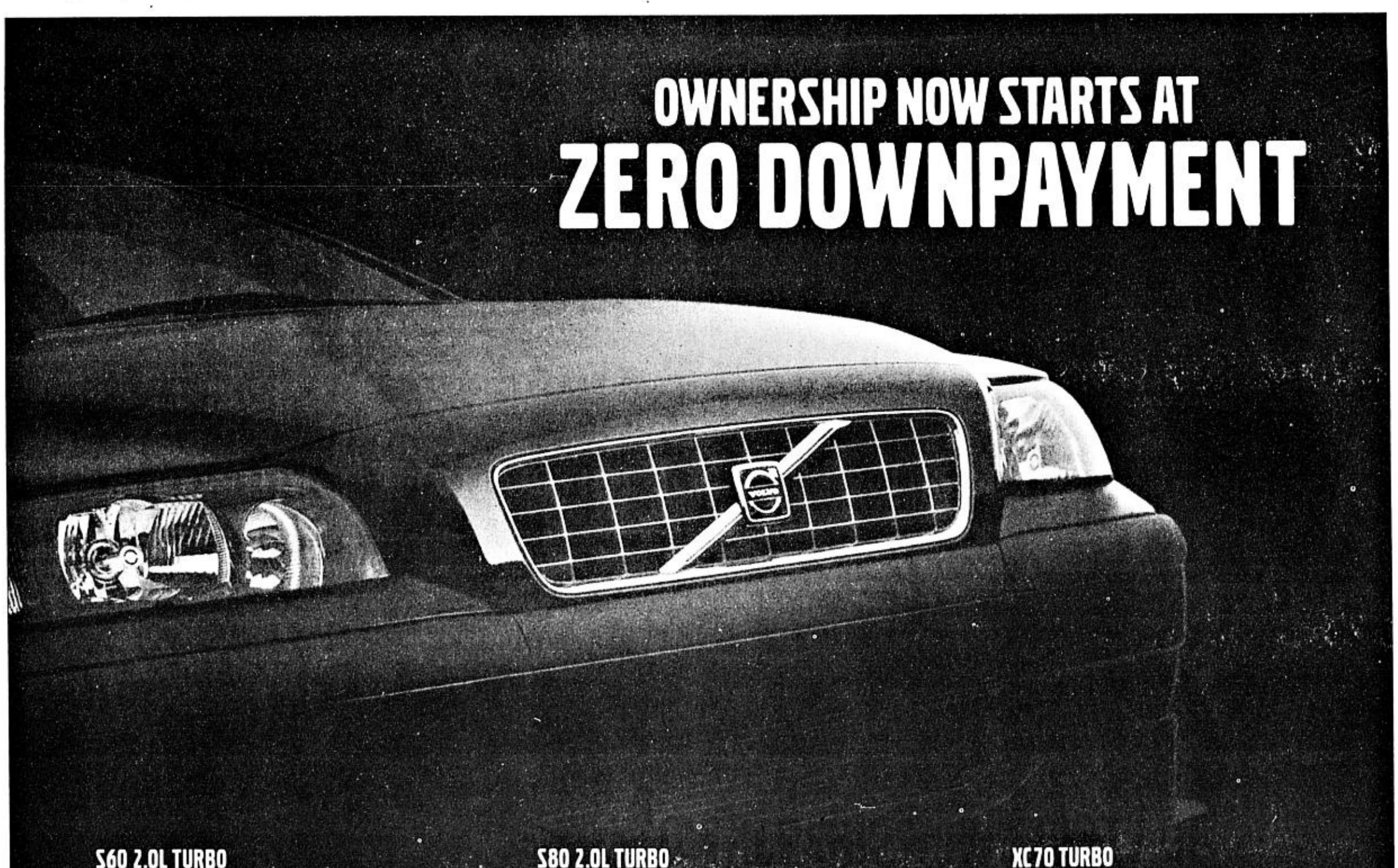
Piltel earlier filed a protest to the aggregate assessment of local franchise tax amounting to P45 million with the Makati City government. The company noted its exemption from the said tax by virtue of its franchise (Republic Act No. 7293), which expressly exempted Piltel from paying local franchise tax except that which is specifically mentioned in Section 6 of its legislative franchise.

The City of Makati had denied Piltel's protest prompting the telecom company to file a petition for review with the RTC of Makati, which upheld Piltel's exemption from paying franchise taxes to the City of Makati.

The City of Makati appealed the case to the Court of Appeals which, however, upheld the RTC decision .

Penned by RTC presiding judge Oscar Pimentel, the decision noted that Piltel's franchise which was passed by Congress on March 27, 1992 took effect after the passage of the Local Government Code (LGC) on Jan. 1, 1992, thus restoring the tax exemption clauses of franchises which came after the passage of the LGC.

The CA decision is considered precedent-setting as it now determines that telecom franchises which contain the specific exemption clause and were passed after the effectivity of the LGC are exempt from payment of local franchise tax.



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BQ-I

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BANKING Quarterly

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Banks rethink 'bigger is better' strategy

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANKING sector may be at the twilight of that era when every one is a Julius Ceasar voraciously expanding his empire to fill state coffers. Or at least, this is what what more and more bankers are starting to believe.

Having the economies of scale—which can be achieved by building up the branch network and aggressively expanding the core business of lending—is still crucial for banks to sustain a wide revenue base. However, size is no longer something that banks will want to trade off for capital adequacy.

In other words, fading is the paradigm that bigger is better. A bank which has P500 billion in resources is not necessarily performing better than another bank half in size but carries less risky assets.

A case in point is taipan Henry Sy's Banco de Oro Universal Bank, which is eager to spread its wings but will not do so at all cost.

"Growth is not an objective for us. It's but a by-product of our doing our own strategy," BDO president Nestor Tan said.

Although the bank's principal owner, the SM group, is among the most cash-awash in this country, BDO is very cautious in even deploying its remaining 11 unused branch licenses.

"It is not our intention to be everywhere. We want to focus on high-growth commercial areas and that's where we shall build a strong presence," Tan said.

But given the opportunity to grow big, BDO is on full alert as proven by its attempt to take over the controlling stake in fourth biggest lender Equitable PCI Bank.

For Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, he still wants to see big mergers and consolidations in the banking system.

As such, the BSP has continued to encourage mergers and consolidation, particularly of ailing banks with stronger banks as a means to hasten their rehabilitation or to avert a possible bank closure, by offering short-term incentives to merging or consolidating financial institutions.

"Bigger is still better for certain things, but there's still a role for small banks. Both small and big banks have roles to play," Buenaventura said.

But aside from strengthening the ailing banks, the BSP chief said he would like to see more consolidation in the banking system to produce strong local players that could compete globally.

Across the region, there are signs that banks are regaining their foothold after the currency turmoil of 1997.

The Asian Development Bank, in its latest Asia Economic Monitor, said the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio of banks in four out of five crisis-stricken countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand—was slowing down.

It noted that the reduction partly reflected continued progress in debt restructuring, debt repayment, and reduction in new and reentry NPLs, and partly the increases in the stock of outstanding bank loans.

Compared to the four other crisis-hit countries, however, the Philippines was still burdened with the highest NPL ratio. The ADB's

BANKS/ BQ-3

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2. There will be one raffle ticket number for every loan booked. The raffle ticket number will correspond to the loan account number.
3. To qualify for the promo, the purpose of the loan should be any of the following:
   - Purchase of Lot, House and Lot, Townhouse or Residential Condominium
   - House Construction
   - Home Renovation
   - Refinancing of existing loan with other banks
   - Multi-purpose Loan
4. There will be three draws and one Grand Draw wherein client's loan will be erased up to ₱1 Million. Non-winning loan accounts are still qualified in the succeeding draws. The draw dates are as follows:

First Draw	: September 10, 2004	(Friday)	- cut-off dates: July 1 to August 31, 2004
Second Draw	: October 8, 2004	(Friday)	- cut-off dates: July 1 to September 30, 2004
Third Draw	: November 12, 2004	(Friday)	- cut-off dates: July 1 to October 31, 2004
Grand Draw	: December 23, 2004	(Thursday)	- cut-off dates: July 1 to December 15, 2004

The prizes are as follows:

1st Draw - 3 winners of ₱100,000.00 each, tax-free, to be applied to the principal balance.
2nd Draw - 2 winners of ₱250,000.00 each, tax-free, to be applied to the principal balance.
3rd Draw - 1 winner of ₱500,000.00, tax-free, to be applied to the principal balance.*
Grand Draw - 1 winner of ₱1.0 Million, tax-free, to be applied to the entire loan.*

In the event that the outstanding balance of the winner is less than the prize amount, the difference will be credited to the winner's settlement account.

5. All eligible accounts must be in current status as of raffle draw date to be included in the raffle.
6. Each account number may win only once during the entire promo period.
7. Winners will be notified through registered mail and will be published in leading newspapers.
8. All employees of the Unibank, its subsidiaries, its advertising and promo agencies and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity/affinity are disqualified to join this promo.
9. Prizes are neither transferable nor convertible to cash.
10. Taxes on prizes exceeding ₱10,000 will be shouldered by BPI Family Savings Bank.
11. In cases of dispute, the decision of BPI Family Savings Bank, with the concurrence of DTI, shall be deemed final.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1211, Series of 2004.

Total Assets of Commercial Banks
(1st & 2nd quarter 2004, 2nd quarter 2003)

Ranking Q2 '04	Ranking Q1 '04	Commercial Banks	Q2 '04	Q1 '04	% Change	Q2 '03	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	463,883,939,746	472,665,110,148	-1.9%	441,231,146,600	5.1%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	356,231,179,295	346,898,186,200	2.7%	338,329,040,303	5.3%
3	3	Land Bank of the Philippines	285,259,815,921	284,925,078,513	0.1%	271,554,800,846	5.0%
4	4	Equitable PCI Bank	284,281,612,034	278,426,671,307	2.1%	276,626,842,076	2.8%
5	6	Citibank	222,343,149,984	204,826,494,599	8.6%	225,009,875,013	-1.2%
6	5	Philippine National Bank	212,711,976,703	212,013,261,290	0.3%	194,650,530,319	9.3%
7	8	Banco de Oro	151,785,413,486	151,549,574,938	0.2%	126,872,695,816	19.6%
8	7	Development Bank of the Philippines	150,959,657,725	151,821,274,428	-0.6%	153,203,032,104	-1.5%
9	9	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	146,918,033,003	145,454,001,722	1.0%	146,778,278,560	0.1%
10	11	Standard Chartered Bank	120,828,721,982	115,659,481,560	4.5%	39,083,816,616	209.2%
11	10	Allied Banking Corp.	119,715,249,972	119,942,388,324	-0.2%	105,728,436,990	13.2%
12	12	China Banking Corp.	107,127,610,221	106,585,025,162	0.5%	103,417,996,891	3.6%
13	13	United Coconut Planters Bank[f]	105,864,544,914	100,081,385,628	5.8%		
14	14	HSBC	81,963,542,166	81,556,760,118	0.5%	71,790,212,462	14.2%
15	15	Security Bank Corp.	80,105,983,328	75,812,860,651	5.7%	68,526,353,548	16.9%
16	16	Union Bank of the Philippines	76,874,100,957	72,983,993,508	5.3%	68,459,678,086	12.3%
17	19	Philippine Bank of Communications	55,792,114,197	44,357,224,864	25.8%	51,391,767,470	8.6%
18	17	Bank of Commerce	55,047,511,261	53,775,459,065	2.4%	44,526,222,781	23.6%
19	18	Prudential Bank	51,219,860,404	50,747,228,891	0.9%	48,482,748,363	5.6%
20	20	International Exchange Bank	46,405,923,671	44,150,257,147	5.1%	39,417,017,301	17.7%
21	21	Philippine Trust Co.	39,750,379,903	38,956,382,603	2.0%	35,469,618,181	12.1%
22	22	Export and Industry Bank	28,001,522,945	26,354,755,044	6.2%	26,535,016,892	5.5%
23	23	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	25,487,991,166	24,959,284,940	2.1%	22,152,322,218	15.1%
24	24	Deutsche Bank AG[d]	24,963,262,241	21,983,906,025	13.6%	24,255,616,124	2.9%
25	25	International Commercial Bank of China	23,335,953,906	21,364,607,193	9.2%	22,018,866,706	6.0%
26	26	East West Bank	20,345,280,154	19,324,268,462	5.3%	16,245,932,699	25.2%
27	27	ING Barings	19,080,351,770	18,829,984,672	1.3%	16,149,036,671	18.2%
28	28	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	18,731,483,467	18,307,957,338	2.3%	17,726,826,773	5.7%
29	29	Asia United Bank	18,398,257,583	18,152,218,570	1.4%	15,670,260,344	17.4%
30	30	Philippine Veterans Bank	15,795,551,859	16,251,506,912	-2.8%	13,532,160,163	16.7%
31	31	United Overseas Bank	15,688,058,983	15,725,951,289	-0.2%	15,636,022,094	0.3%
32	32	Mizuho Corporate Bank	15,364,413,566	14,372,836,611	6.9%	11,163,459,796	37.6%
33	34	Maybank Phils. Inc.	11,699,171,986	11,539,072,128	1.4%	11,866,632,917	-1.4%
34	33	ABN-Amro Bank	10,702,958,048	12,573,565,513	-14.9%	8,027,809,464	33.3%
35	35	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	9,351,795,160	9,950,043,428	-6.0%	8,157,939,064	14.6%
36	39	BDO Private Bank[c]	8,325,615,043	6,563,418,712	26.8%	5,523,359,791	50.7%
37	36	JP Morgan Chase Bank	8,246,876,143	9,888,145,081	-16.6%	10,065,393,979	-18.1%
38	38	Korea Exchange Bank[e]	7,592,566,982	7,456,609,108	1.8%	9,596,026,699	-20.9%
39	37	Bank of America[a]	7,033,139,113	7,571,984,938	-7.1%	6,442,907,429	9.2%
40	40	Bank of China[b]	5,718,022,045	5,755,373,680	-0.6%	5,150,360,671	11.0%
41	41	Bangkok Bank	3,882,213,878	3,618,194,453	7.3%	4,110,760,536	-5.6%
42	42	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	111,796,506	87,110,761	28.3%	92,631,627	20.7%
		GRAND TOTAL Php	3,512,926,603,415	3,443,818,895,524	2.0%	3,120,669,453,983	9.2%[g]

Total Capital Accounts of Commercial Banks
(1st & 2nd quarter 2004, 2nd quarter 2003)

Ranking Q2 '04	Ranking Q1 '04	Commercial Banks	Q2 '04	Q1 '04	% Change	Q2 '03	% Change
1	1	Bank of the Philippine Islands	53,284,422,423	53,359,418,065	-0.1%	51,342,151,904	3.8%
2	2	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	51,956,777,282	52,054,216,280	-0.2%	51,174,036,750	1.5%
3	3	Equitable PCI Bank	42,778,867,820	42,727,954,111	0.1%	42,095,565,310	1.6%
4	4	Philippine National Bank	23,846,152,700	23,624,638,175	0.9%	23,775,603,172	0.3%
5	6	China Banking Corp.	18,890,909,885	18,394,542,023	2.7%	16,973,639,328	11.3%
6	7	Development Bank of the Philippines	18,797,245,710	17,947,596,235	4.7%	19,121,288,105	-1.7%
7	5	Land Bank of the Philippines	17,016,020,943	23,231,217,022	-26.8%	22,137,722,476	-23.1%
8	10	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	16,275,317,988	15,394,851,614	5.7%	16,826,683,739	-3.3%
9	8	Banco de Oro	15,754,531,625	15,484,762,353	1.7%	14,397,196,665	9.4%
10	9	Union Bank of the Philippines	15,242,428,899	15,406,745,705	-1.1%	14,849,455,458	2.6%
11	11	Allied Banking Corp.	14,687,795,518	14,718,444,091	-0.2%	14,293,504,579	2.8%
12	12	Security Bank Corp.	10,612,363,684	10,396,531,264	2.1%	10,204,990,189	4.0%
13	15	Citibank	7,645,362,793	4,664,898,324	63.9%	4,662,790,344	64.0%
14	13	Prudential Bank	6,892,024,696	7,132,524,589	-3.4%	9,057,574,270	-23.9%
15	14	Philippine Bank of Communications	6,511,359,874	6,391,417,868	1.9%	6,731,421,026	-3.3%
16	17	Philippine Trust Co.	4,608,347,706	4,454,984,613	3.4%	4,128,780,514	11.6%
17	18	International Exchange Bank	4,470,146,199	4,380,912,453	2.0%	4,103,211,359	8.9%
18	16	Export and Industry Bank	4,467,720,981	4,465,440,385	0.1%	4,382,309,362	1.9%
19	19	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	4,037,630,983	3,930,464,610	2.7%	3,728,545,209	8.3%
20	21	Asia United Bank	3,844,498,472	3,749,199,332	2.5%	3,430,610,123	12.1%
21	22	Philippine Veterans Bank	3,767,588,236	3,720,574,408	1.3%	3,614,818,632	4.2%
22	20	Bank of Commerce	3,742,596,942	3,755,728,692	-0.3%	3,686,895,166	1.5%
23	23	East West Bank	2,874,785,752	2,918,020,104	-1.5%	2,893,519,606	-0.6%
24	25	BDO Private Bank[c]	2,791,732,816	2,712,678,451	2.9%	2,625,726,326	6.3%
25	24	ABN-Amro Bank	2,763,208,002	2,865,231,390	-3.6%	2,984,388,683	-7.4%
26	26	Maybank Phils. Inc.	2,402,240,659	2,400,711,751	0.1%	2,419,071,169	-0.7%
27	27	ING Barings	1,368,392,970	1,492,584,902	-8.3%	1,329,110,336	3.0%
28	29	HSBC	1,334,145,474	1,327,838,266	0.5%	1,343,973,497	-0.7%
29	28	United Overseas Bank	1,325,192,629	1,472,902,782	-10.0%	2,072,444,951	-36.1%
30	30	Standard Chartered Bank	1,267,694,704	1,256,834,500	0.9%	1,256,834,500	0.9%
31	32	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	720,433,671	720,433,671	0.0%	720,433,671	0.0%
32	33	Deutsche Bank AG[d]	626,879,343	626,879,343	0.0%	625,000,000	0.3%
33	34	Mizuho Corporate Bank	601,912,599	601,912,599	0.0%	601,912,599	0.0%
34	35	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	538,864,343	502,353,143	7.3%	528,714,128	1.9%
35	36	Bank of America[a]	422,500,000	422,500,000	0.0%	422,500,000	0.0%
36	38	International Commercial Bank of China	405,434,000	405,434,000	0.0%	405,434,000	0.0%
37	37	Bank of China[b]	397,098,599	413,827,610	-4.0%	409,815,241	-3.1%
38	31	United Coconut Planters Bank[f]	324,769,134	1,057,539,999	-69.3%	-	-
39	39	Bangkok Bank	265,831,677	265,831,677	0.0%	265,831,677	0.0%
40	40	Korea Exchange Bank[e]	257,000,000	257,000,000	0.0%	257,000,000	0.0%
41	41	JP Morgan Chase Bank	201,065,496	118,735,164	69.3%	256,445,157	-21.6%
42	42	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	(370,310,169)	(357,006,642)	-3.7%	(311,565,620)	18.9%
		GRAND TOTAL Php	369,648,984,058	370,869,304,922	-0.3%	365,825,383,602	1.0%[g]

Total Deposit Accounts of Commercial Banks
(1st quarter 2003 & 2004, 4th quarter 2003)

Ranking Q2 '04	Ranking Q1 '04	Commercial Banks	Q2 '04	Q1 '04	% Change	Q2 '03	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	344,780,422,625	350,620,272,252	-1.7%	342,730,611,790	0.6%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	286,082,387,665	277,130,867,539	3.2%	268,501,923,529	6.5%
3	3	Land Bank of the Philippines	211,954,069,522	208,575,221,185	1.6%	200,576,878,053	5.7%
4	4	Equitable PCI Bank	185,203,826,047	182,030,945,672	1.7%	172,255,733,494	7.5%
5	5	Philippine National Bank	154,631,337,210	150,242,462,654	2.9%	143,478,076,233	7.8%
6	6	Citibank	133,065,401,474	141,709,298,007		126,582,648,822	5.1%
7	8	Banco de Oro	105,784,705,148	102,765,804,328	2.9%	93,382,050,401	13.3%
8	7	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	101,412,520,366	105,766,161,650	-4.1%	104,780,582,515	-3.2%
9	9	Allied Banking Corp.	94,399,072,024	92,798,678,183	1.7%	80,500,320,489	17.3%
10	11	United Coconut Planters Bank[f]	79,437,513,198	72,431,694,304			-
11	10	China Banking Corp.	74,088,226,664	72,703,585,944	1.9%	72,807,365,718	1.8%
12	12	HSBC	54,305,038,160	57,707,505,517	-5.9%	55,053,043,653	-1.4%
13	13	Security Bank Corp.	49,714,384,882	50,799,025,781	-2.1%	42,829,987,480	16.1%
14	14	Union Bank of the Philippines	48,637,232,700	46,321,359,450	5.0%	46,319,454,243	5.0%
15	21	Standard Chartered Bank	42,712,615,760	23,544,292,212	81.4%	26,330,769,097	62.2%
16	16	Bank of Commerce	40,908,262,332	39,690,474,237	3.1%	32,618,839,558	25.4%
17	17	Prudential Bank	39,691,385,903	38,080,570,242	4.2%	35,503,545,982	11.8%
18	18	International Exchange Bank	36,668,192,704	35,567,941,802	3.1%	31,767,646,721	15.4%
19	15	Development Bank of the Philippines	36,045,941,902	40,650,130,947	-11.3%	34,619,514,219	4.1%
20	19	Philippine Trust Co.	34,275,929,637	33,611,113,626	2.0%	30,309,483,622	13.1%
21	20	Philippine Bank of Communications	30,026,159,354	27,299,218,452	10.0%	36,027,448,594	-16.7%
22	22	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	19,090,208,615	18,993,075,809	0.5%	15,393,977,054	24.0%
23	23	East West Bank	14,557,548,123	14,200,461,359	2.5%	12,241,435,540	18.9%
24	24	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	11,993,171,675	12,027,345,032	-0.3%	11,441,006,668	4.8%
25	28	Asia United Bank	10,652,652,330	10,125,348,329	5.2%	7,999,197,659	33.2%
26	29	Export and Industry Bank	10,459,049,498	9,916,902,081	5.5%	7,267,152,169	43.9%
27	27	United Overseas Bank	10,243,404,433	10,408,448,718	-1.6%	9,075,721,721	12.9%
28	26	Philippine Veterans Bank	10,157,839,246	10,464,376,756	-2.9%	8,701,553,475	16.7%
29	25	Deutsche Bank AG[d]	9,223,809,429	10,761,709,870	-14.3%	13,316,519,124	-30.7%
30	31	Maybank Phils. Inc.	6,148,606,194	6,088,405,164	1.0%	6,365,454,103	-3.4%
31	33	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	4,925,649,991	4,979,734,165	-1.1%	4,091,769,459	20.4%
32	32	Mizuho Corporate Bank	4,881,579,811	5,463,997,359	-10.7%	3,659,208,338	33.4%
33	30	ABN-Amro Bank	4,289,475,007	8,063,396,663	-46.8%	3,062,483,091	40.1%
34	34	JP Morgan Chase Bank	3,980,354,911	5,421,882,712	-26.6%	5,424,040,915	-26.6%
35	37	Bank of America[a]	3,133,376,708	3,171,194,586	-1.2%	2,840,000,918	10.3%
36	36	ING Barings	2,785,457,416	4,045,330,316	-31.1%	6,512,146,660	-57.2%
37	38	BDO Private Bank[c]	2,781,514,852	1,766,739,436	57.4%	1,847,406,926	50.6%
38	35	Korea Exchange Bank[e]	2,371,077,997	4,167,823,281	-43.1%	2,694,762,143	-12.0%
39	39	International Commercial Bank of China	1,579,020,114	1,553,385,564	1.7%	1,862,877,730	-15.2%
40	40	Bangkok Bank	733,225,252	626,563,906	17.0%	797,727,065	-8.1%
41	41	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	430,438,088	384,743,597	11.9%	356,266,830	20.8%
42	42	Bank of China[b]	399,607,489	351,207,160	13.8%	198,273,679	101.5%
		GRAND TOTAL Php	2,318,641,692,456	2,293,028,695,849	1.1%	2,102,124,905,479	6.5%[g]

Loans, Discounts & Advances of Commercial Banks
(1st & 2nd quarter 2004, 2nd quarter 2003)

Ranking Q2 '04	Ranking Q1 '04	Commercial Banks	Q2 '04	Q1 '04	% Change	Q2 '03	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	198,612,775,437	203,741,615,404	-2.5%	186,793,765,380	6.3%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	150,164,825,447	144,579,185,226	3.9%	147,763,650,114	1.6%
3	5	Land Bank of the Philippines	111,981,365,618	103,488,166,005	8.2%	121,842,658,201	-8.1%
4	3	Equitable PCI Bank	101,311,119,265	105,381,607,208	-3.9%	109,505,624,296	-7.5%
5	6	Citibank	92,016,855,697	85,322,924,526	7.8%	80,029,905,828	15.0%
6	7	Development Bank of the Philippines	66,770,005,139	68,502,335,398	-2.5%	65,521,241,897	1.9%
7	8	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	62,087,697,252	58,964,180,522	5.3%	62,332,022,474	-0.4%
8	4	Banco de Oro	59,369,142,180	57,448,505,258	3.3%	53,880,059,822	10.2%
9	9	Philippine National Bank	56,618,295,353	57,838,083,397	-2.1%	63,095,829,262	-10.3%
10	10	United Coconut Planters Bank[f]	44,127,123,368	46,019,285,769	-4.1%		-
11	11	Allied Banking Corp.	42,603,467,137	41,922,427,363	1.6%	40,184,083,581	6.0%
12	13	Security Bank Corp.	34,935,032,879	34,235,897,196	2.0%	35,030,090,998	-0.3%
13	12	China Banking Corp.	34,761,197,390	39,363,438,827	-11.7%	35,023,370,198	-0.7%
14	14	HSBC	23,064,320,627	22,650,275,180	1.8%	19,545,520,738	18.0%
15	15	Bank of Commerce	20,899,226,348	21,072,502,644	-0.8%	17,099,136,999	22.2%
16	16	International Exchange Bank	18,914,087,478	19,832,048,274	-4.6%	17,234,652,295	9.7%
17	17	Standard Chartered Bank	17,134,086,273	16,040,659,649	6.8%	18,882,058,455	-9.3%
18	18	Union Bank of the Philippines	14,608,215,361	15,363,721,887	-4.9%	12,126,942,109	20.5%
19	19	Prudential Bank	12,890,509,710	13,246,013,491	-2.7%	17,345,861,002	-25.7%
20	20	Philippine Trust Co.	12,676,138,648	12,611,510,167	0.5%	12,137,913,184	4.4%
21	22	ING Barings	12,608,138,137	11,221,032,615	12.4%	8,984,365,144	40.3%
22	21	Philippine Bank of Communications	11,467,558,370	11,233,142,965	2.1%	17,232,101,122	-33.5%
23	24	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	11,084,383,927	10,622,202,619	4.4%	10,718,717,952	3.4%
24	26	East West Bank	10,847,183,765	10,544,885,234	2.9%	9,772,670,260	11.0%
25	23	Asia United Bank	10,624,418,106	10,921,686,899	-2.7%	10,319,589,242	3.0%
26	25	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	10,440,121,155	10,589,266,926	-1.4%	11,224,368,545	-7.0%
27	27	International Commercial Bank of China	9,132,029,336	8,915,685,122	2.4%	9,459,101,867	-3.5%
28	28	United Overseas Bank	6,636,314,593	6,796,741,681	-2.4%	7,118,755,395	-6.8%
29	29	Export and Industry Bank	6,571,980,216	6,244,068,973	5.3%	9,351,102,928	-29.7%
30	31	Mizuho Corporate Bank	6,075,365,935	5,745,801,962	5.7%	5,788,963,294	4.9%
31	32	Maybank Phils. Inc.	5,737,503,288	5,498,570,280	4.3%	6,658,377,706	-13.8%
32	30	Philippine Veterans Bank	5,716,645,634	5,746,711,629	-0.5%	4,794,992,078	19.2%
33	33	Deutsche Bank AG[d]	4,860,404,309	5,275,150,982	-7.9%	6,325,409,175	-23.2%
34	36	ABN-Amro Bank	4,505,535,723	3,222,789,004	39.8%	2,756,889,932	63.4%
35	35	Bank of China[b]	4,300,019,005	4,547,708,936	-5.4%	4,330,067,146	-0.7%
36	34	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	3,293,356,296	4,979,734,165	-33.9%	3,094,445,552	6.4%
37	38	Bangkok Bank	1,274,583,347	1,090,448,560	16.9%	1,787,036,461	-28.7%
38	40	JP Morgan Chase Bank	990,371,850	893,588,517	10.8%	969,483,573	2.2%
39	39	Korea Exchange Bank[e]	935,544,061	934,209,630	0.1%	1,308,535,164	-28.5%
40	37	Bank of America[a]	799,654,381	1,414,999,302	-43.5%	1,281,761,080	-37.6%
41	41	BDO Private Bank[c]	111,791,682	152,995,620	-26.9%	1,707,552,788	-93.5%
42	42	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	2,358,390	2,425,951	-2.8%	2,728,850	-13.6%
		GRAND TOTAL Php	1,303,560,748,112	1,294,218,230,960	0.7%	1,250,361,402,087	0.7%[g]

Non- Performing loans of Commercial Banks[F]
(1st & 2nd quarter 2004)

Ranking Q2 '04	Ranking Q1 '04	Commercial Banks	NPL amount Q2 '04	NPL amount Q1 '04	Total loans Q2 '04	Total loans Q1 '04
1	1	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	95.00%	95.00%	7,520,606	7,520,606	7,916,427	7,916,427
2	2	United Overseas Bank	59.63%	60.62%	4,862,246,894	4,882,858,355	8,154,027,996	8,054,863,668
3	3	Philippine National Bank	44.00%	47.00%	44,889,469,130	45,534,828,690	102,021,520,750	96,882,614,234
4	4	United Coconut Planters Bank[f]	33.00%	34.13%	18,749,490,860	18,588,628,536	56,816,638,971	54,464,191,432
5	6	Prudential Bank	26.28%	26.78%	4,465,899,350	6,322,997,053	16,993,528,729	23,610,892,655
6	5	Bangkok Bank	24.33%	27.38%	528,491,044	539,373,735	2,172,178,563	1,969,955,206
7	7	Bank of Commerce	23.72%	23.22%	5,589,295,888.63	5,795,304,973	23,563,642,026	24,958,247,086
8	8	Export and Industry Bank	19.26%	19.07%	1,947,670,344	1,961,482,257	10,112,514,766	10,285,696,156
9	22	Philippine Bank of Communications	18.94%	9.91%	2,822,623,923	1,340,416,381	14,902,977,419	13,525,896,880
10	10	Maybank Phils. Inc.	17.77%	17.08%	1,288,076,918	1,234,501,166	7,248,603,928	7,227,758,586
11	9	Allied Banking Corp.	15.81%	17.46%	8,596,095,000	8,619,575,000	54,371,252,372	49,367,554,410
12	12	Land Bank of the Philippines	15.15%	16.32%	22,756,484,429	23,611,078,541	150,207,818,013	144,675,726,354
13	11	Union Bank of the Philippines	14.80%	16.45%	4,005,471,892	4,750,387,370	27,063,999,270	28,877,734,772
14	14	China Banking Corp.	14.65%	14.00%	9,232,558,833	8,761,752,802	63,020,879,406	62,583,948,586
15	13	Equitable PCI Bank	14.34%	14.69%	21,841,607,357	21,537,593,783	152,312,464,135	146,613,980,824
16	15	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	13.05%	13.26%	33,658,363,206	34,226,632,085	257,918,492,000	258,119,397,323
17	17	International Exchange Bank	12.30%	12.63%	2,610,009,263	2,797,514,840	21,219,587,504	22,149,761,203
18	16	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	11.89%	12.77%	11,518,072,000	11,735,138,000	96,871,925,988	91,896,147,220
19	24	Asia United Bank	11.82%	9.87%	1,494,965,030	1,299,539,654	12,647,758,288	13,166,561,848
20	19	Development Bank of the Philippines	10.66%	11.36%	9,362,086,422	9,942,633,701	87,824,450,488	87,523,183,988
21	34	Standard Chartered Bank	10.43%	1.90%	2,308,596,125	1,511,654,488	22,134,191,035	79,560,762,526
22	21	Philippine Trust Co.	10.24%	10.39%	1,427,989,690	1,440,744,126	13,945,211,821	13,866,642,216
23	18	East West Bank	9.42%	11.43%	1,067,975,709	1,269,406,704	11,337,321,748	11,105,920,423
24	25	Philippine Veterans Bank	8.15%	8.75%	582,800,386	674,568,905	7,150,924,984	7,709,358,917
25	23	Security Bank Corp.	7.78%	9.89%	3,208,854,281	4,118,813,815	41,244,913,638	41,646,246,866
26	28	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	7.14%	5.60%	883,808,273	631,548,593	12,378,267,133	11,277,653,452
27	26	Banco de Oro	6.73%	7.45%	5,076,763,391	5,633,613,701	75,434,820,074	75,618,975,852
28	20	Bank of the Philippine Islands	6.24%	6.98%	11,208,537,080	11,326,295,707	179,623,991,667	162,267,861,132
29	29	International Commercial Bank of China	4.61%	5.38%	473,727,413	520,345,929	10,276,082,711	9,671,857,416
30	31	Mizuho Corporate Bank	4.54%	5.05%	456,552,680	458,325,180	10,056,226,430	9,075,746,137
31	30	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	4.23%	5.36%	149,123,381	149,123,381	3,525,375,437	2,782,152,631
32	27	JP Morgan Chase Bank	4.06%	6.56%	198,528,029	198,528,029	4,889,852,931	3,026,341,905
33	32	HSBC	3.91%	4.84%	1,236,099,582	1,480,540,707	31,613,800,051	30,589,684,029
34	33	ING Barings	2.18%	2.43%	295,345,019	296,251,656	13,547,936,669	12,191,426,158
35	36	Citibank	1.17%	1.21%	1,621,647,061	1,548,069,182	138,602,312,872	127,939,601,783
36	35	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	0.94%	1.37%	211,360,305	199,187,922	22,485,138,830	14,539,264,380
37	38	ABN-Amro Bank	0.79%	0.39%	28,973,113	29,914,521	3,667,482,658	7,670,390,000
-	-	Bank of America[a]	0.00%	0.00%	204.36	8.00	762,254,479	1,600,000,000
-	-	Bank of China[b]	0.00%	0.00%	-	-		
-	-	BDO Private Bank[c]	-	-	-	-	1,316,446,133	2,824,399,306
-	-	Deutsche Bank AG[d]	0.00%	0.00%	-	-		10,035,110,091
-	-	Korea Exchange Bank[e]	0.00%	0.61%	1,576	14,950,761	2,829,121,750	2,450,944,351
		GRAND TOTAL Php			240,663,181,689	244,991,641,844	1,772,273,850,091	1,783,612,368,429

Return on Equity
(1st & 2nd quarter 2004, 2nd quarter 2003)

Ranking Q2 '04	Ranking Q1 '04	Commercial Banks	Q2 '04	Q1 '04	Q2 '03
1	2	Deutsche Bank AG[d]	25.89%	51.66%	30.98%
2	6	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	21.85%	19.51%	20.33%
3	3	HSBC	21.72%	25.81%	13.68%
4	9	China Banking Corp.	18.02%	15.73%	19.54%
5	15	International Exchange Bank	15.68%	10.67%	9.57%
6	10	ING Barings	15.42%	15.42%	2.38%
7	7	Standard Chartered Bank	14.50%	17.12%	3.70%
8	4	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	13.22%	20.84%	19.24%
9	13	Bank of the Philippine Islands	12.98%	11.20%	11.36%
10	39	BDO Private Bank[c]	11.87%	-0.42%	2.01%
11	12	International Commercial Bank of China	11.82%	13.39%	5.68%
12	11	Union Bank of the Philippines	11.69%	15.18%	13.55%
13	19	Land Bank of the Philippines	11.32%	9.36%	11.02%
14	18	Asia United Bank	10.88%	10.04%	11.18%
15	22	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	10.65%	6.97%	2.41%
16	20	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	9.57%	9.23%	14.95%
17	16	Development Bank of the Philippines	9.53%	10.15%	10.20%
18	14	Banco de Oro	9.45%	10.72%	7.89%
19	23	Security Bank Corp.	9.35%	6.53%	9.74%
20	40	ABN-Amro Bank	8.74%	-1.67%	24.10%
21	5	Citibank	6.79%	20.68%	25.46%
22	26	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	6.61%	5.11%	6.16%
23	21	Philippine Trust Co.	6.19%	6.99%	6.19%
24	29	Philippine Veterans Bank	5.82%	4.06%	5.46%
25	27	Prudential Bank	4.47%	5.04%	4.75%
26	24	Korea Exchange Bank[e]	4.07%	6.39%	7.30%
27	17	Allied Banking Corp.	3.89%	10.13%	6.31%
28	30	Equitable PCI Bank	2.78%	3.29%	2.88%
29	25	Mizuho Corporate Bank	2.77%	5.34%	0.50%
30	34	Bangkok Bank	1.08%	1.00%	-17.60%
31	33	East West Bank	1.06%	1.09%	8.30%
32	28	Bank of Commerce	1.02%	5.01%	1.66%
33	37	Maybank Phils. Inc.	0.94%	-0.09%	-12.30%
34	36	Philippine National Bank	0.40%	0.50%	1.00%
35	31	Export and Industry Bank	0.38%	3.22%	3.39%
36	35	Bank of America[a]	0.37%	0.71%	66.83%
37	38

RP banks ready, waiting for new ground rules

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE BANK for International Settlements (BIS) over the next two years will come out with a new framework that will require banks to adopt risk-sensitive minimum capital requirements.

With the new framework, it is hoped that international banks will have more reliable means to weigh up their capital against the risks they face.

This early on, some Philippine banks are anticipating the adoption of the new guidelines to ease their way through the transition.

The BIS, an international organization of central banks based in Switzerland, saw the need to lay out the principles to strengthen discipline in the market.

Once the new regulatory structure is in place, the BIS hopes to enhance transparency in the banks' financial reporting.

The new set of standards for establishing minimum capital requirements is being prepared by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, a group of central banks and authorities in the G10 countries which drafted the first standard in 1988.

The Basel Committee hopes that by 2007, they will have put in place the most advanced approaches to risk measurement.

KPMG International, in a study written by Jorg Hashagen (head of KPMG's Basel Initiative) in 2003, said that it was the Basel committee that introduced the concept of "economic capital."

Banks apply this concept to determine their capital adequacy, based on the level of risk posed by certain business activities.

The Basel committee hopes to overcome the shortcomings of the 1988 regulatory structure, which did not require banks to develop their own systems that would have allowed them to match capital against risks.

According to the KPMG, banks face a number of risks that could open them up to "unexpected losses."

KPMG wrote that the Basel committee has made it more urgent for banks to focus on managing economic capital.

To comply with the Basel principles, banks will have to develop various models to help them determine how much capital they need to set aside for a business activity, based on the risks presented them. They will also have to determine the kind of activity that contributes to the bank's portfolio of risks.

Ultimately, KPMG said, a bank's lenders and investors expect its management to take on "calculated, well-priced risk" to ensure that loan capital is repaid with interest on a sustainable basis, and that the bank's shareholder value is enhanced over the long-term.

Investors expect that "the greater the risk assumed by the bank"—and the higher their personal share of the risk—the higher their expected return will be.

According to the KPMG, profitable banks are run by management teams that actively seek out risk and distinguish well-priced opportunities.

KPMG says that risk measurement focuses on unexpected losses which may arise from lower than expected returns from assets, or as a result of having to pay more than expected liabilities.

These unexpected losses can lead to volatility in the earnings—ranging from lower profits to balance sheet losses and, possibly, bankruptcy.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has been anticipating the Basil Committee's framework and begun issuing a series of directives raising minimum capital requirements.

One of the first to comply was the Bank of the Philippine Islands.

Metrobank and other commercial banks have also been beefing up their respective capital base by raising funds from subordinated debt.

Metrobank so far has raised $325 million in subordinated debt issues since 2002.

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From page BQ-1

latest available data showed that the NPL ratio was at 7.8 percent in Indonesia, 2.6 percent in Korea, 8 percent in Malaysia, 13.6 percent in the Philippines, and 12.1 percent in Thailand.

The ADB said the decline in the NPL ratios was largely a result of transfers of large amounts of non-performing assets from banks' balance sheets to centralized asset management companies (AMCs).

The Philippines, for its part, passed the Special Purpose Vehicle Act in 2002 to help banks unload their bad assets, but very few banks have taken advantage of the fiscal incentives since then.

In July, Bank of the Philippine Islands signed a deal to sell P8.6 billion worth of bad loans to Morgan Stanley Emerging Markets Inc., the first and only transaction structured by a single bank under the SPV law.

Prior to the BPI deal, the BSP also allowed the creditors of National Steel Corp., which struck a landmark P13.79-billion asset sale with an Indian firm, to avail themselves of the perks offered by the SPV law. The transaction between Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd., a unit of the Mittal family's Ispat Industries Ltd., and creditors led by Philippine National Bank was the single biggest SPV deal in the country.

The SPV law's failure to attract more deals has been a big disappointment for many analysts and economists, especially since the deadline to register with the BSP the bad assets to be unloaded will lapse this September. As such, there has been a clamor to extend the effectivity of the law.

"Resolution of banks' bad asset problem, critical to ensure adequate supply and efficient allocation of funds, continues to drag. There is need to pass legislation to extend the SPAV Law, possibly offering more incentives (the carrot) and/or come up with stricter regulations (the stick) to compel banks to clean up their balance sheets," said former finance undersecretary Romeo Bernardo.

Capital adequacy

While banks across the region are still busy cleaning up the bad assets that piled up since the 1997 Asian currency turmoil, regulators are fine-tuning their own regulatory and supervisory practices in line with BIS standards.

Across the globe, regulators have shifted to an examination system largely based on capital-to-risk asset ratio. Like its foreign counterparts, the BSP has adopted the CAMELS quantitative performance criteria.

CAMELS is the acronym used to refer to six key factors used in bank examination—capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk. In the Philippines, banks are given a CAMELS rating of 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest.

Tougher risk management guidelines have compelled banks to issue tier-2 instruments and consider other long-term debt instruments, including long-term negotiable certificates of deposits and senior notes.

Likewise issued early this year were tougher standards on the management of large exposures, on single borrowers limits, and on lending to directors, officers, stockholders and related interests.

"These will likely spur corporate borrowers to diversify their funding sources beyond the usual friendly banks and in the direction of the capital market," Buenaventura said.

In terms of risk-weighted capital adequacy ratios (CARS) of commercial banks, the Philippines has done pretty well versus the Basle norm of 8 percent.

Based on ADB's regional data, the latest ratio stood at 17.7 percent in the Philippines.

Looking forward

The overall outlook for the banking sector has turned rosy but a lot of challenges remain.

For one, the BSP chief himself admitted that the banking sector was still vulnerable to cyclical downturns—such as what happened during the currency crisis of 1997—for as long as the domestic capital market remained stagnant.

"It is not enough to develop a more conducive regulatory environment. A more direct contribution is to help develop appropriate market infrastructure," Buenaventura said.

"In this regard, we are strongly supporting private sector initiative, led by the Bankers Association of the Philippines, to establish the fixed income exchange and its related infrastructure to ensure efficient and safe clearing and settlement of securities transactions," he said.

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BANKING Quarterly

Go for T-bonds, investors advised

WITH the elections finally over and the political jitters already gone, people think the country's investment climate will now start showing stability and investors will find it comfortable to leave the sidelines and start investing their money.

But while continuity in the government's program is assured with the fresh six-year term given to President Macapagal-Arroyo, the country cannot afford to be complacent.

Serious issues like a possible credit-rating downgrade and threats of a fiscal crisis beset the Arroyo administration.

With a scenario of both optimism and caution, people looking for investment outlets may be needing tips from professionals.

INQUIRER's Michelle V. Remo asked officers of select banks on what investment products they would recommend to prospective investors, especially those with capital of P100,000 to P500,000. The following are the tips they shared:

Alvin Antonio
AVP for global distribution and advertising
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

"PLACING investments in regular government securities remains the safest option. One can opt for retail treasury bonds or RTBs that the government is issuing this month. (The minimum investment requirement is P5,000.)

But if one is looking for an alternative, I will also recommend local government (LGU) bonds issued by municipalities to finance certain projects. The LGU bonds have almost the same features as regular government securities, but are higher-yielding.

An investment of only P100,000 earns an interest equivalent to the Mart-1 rate of 182-day treasury bill plus a 3.5-percent spread. This means that if prevailing rate is at 7.875 percent, the LGU bond fetches an interest of 11.375-percent.

Coupons are given semi-annually, and the coupon rate is re-priced every six months based on the current 182-day T-bill rate.

RCBC is a pioneer in offering LGU bonds. It is currently offering the Toledo bonds, which are issued by a municipality in Cebu.

In investing, one should not be too much worried about the political climate because politics in the Philippines is always chaotic. If one will be afraid of political events, then he might as well put off his plans to invest."

Danny Sison
Treasurer
Bangkok Bank

"IT is advisable to invest in either government securities or regular bank deposits. But in making such investments, it is better to stick to short-term rather than long-term instruments.

This is because there is still room for interest rates to go up in the future, considering the lingering budget deficit concerns of the government. With this, one may not want to be locked up in long-term investments.

If we talk about retail investments, say about P100,000, high-yielding deposits in small and medium banks are advisable. Since deposits of up to P250,000 are insured by the PDIC (Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.) anyway, depositors need not worry in placing their money in small or medium banks. Yields offered by these banks are normally one percent to 2 percent higher than what the big banks are offering."

Ador Abrogena
SVP and head of trust banking group
Banco de Oro

"CHOOSING the right investment option depends on one's objective—whether to earn more from long-term placements or to easily get returns through short-term instruments.

If an investor can afford to lock in his money for the long term, then the government's retail treasury bonds, available through banks, are a good choice. Rates of the three- and five-year RTBs stand at 11 and 11.75 percent, respectively. It is recommended for small investors because the minimum investment requirement is only P5,000.

RTBs are a good choice, but one has to be prepared to lock in his investment for three or five years. But if the investors would need to liquidate before the bonds' maturity, RTBs can be sold easily although there will be no guarantee on the selling price since it is dependent on market rates.

Conservative investors may also tap Banco de Oro's common trust fund (CTF). This outlet requires a minimum investment of P100,000 and gives a yield based on the 91-day T-bill rate—or between 7 and 8 percent.

The CTF gives enough security to clients because one's money can easily be liquidated and that the funds placed in CTFs are placed in diversified investments outlets, therefore minimizing risk.

Under the CTF, interest is given monthly. The client has the option of letting his money stay for reinvestment to earn compounded interest.

The incentive of keeping the money longer is the tax discounts. If the money is kept for at least three years, the client will have to pay a tax of 12 percent but if it is kept for at least five years, the tax will only be 5 percent."

NOT GOOD ENOUGH

SPV Act misses goal

By Amanda Carpo
Contributor

OF LATE, the Philippine banking sector has been at the center stage of legislative reform. Laws affecting banks include Republic Act No. 9194, amending the Anti- Money Laundering Act of 2001; Republic Act No. 9238, re-instating the gross receipts tax (GRT) on banks and non-bank financial intermediaries; Republic Act No. 9294, re-imposing the tax exemption of Overseas Banking and Foreign Currency Deposit Units, and Republic Act No. 9182, the Special Purpose Vehicle Act of 2002 (SPV Act).

Of these laws, the SPV Act stands out at least in its intent to turn things around for the financial sector, based on the tax incentives granted.

Now is a good time to take score of the success of the law given that the incentives granted by RA 9182 will soon expire.

What is immediately noticeable is the law's limited achievements as measured by investor interest. If the SPV Act's goal was the speedy recovery of the financial sector, it seems to have missed the target.

The government went through great lengths in defining the parameters of the law and creating implementing rules that would protect its interests. However, perfecting the IRR and plugging loopholes in its implementation is secondary to crafting a law that adequately considers the market where it applies.

The SPV Act was aimed at liquidating existing non-performing assets (NPAs) of banks and financial institutions (FIs). Under the mechanics of the law, an SPV—a highly capitalized corporation—is formed for the single purpose of purchasing and disposing the NPAs of banks—consisting of non-performing loans and real and other properties owned or acquired.

In purchasing the NPAs, the SPV must assume all the rights and obligations of the financial institution involved so that it can collect or restructure the non-performing loans or sell the property it has purchased. The SPV can also issue debt instruments in the form of IUIs or investment unit instruments, backed by the receivables from the NPAs.

The purchase and sale of NPAs are virtually tax-free. They are exempt from the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax, creditable withholding tax, gross receipt tax and value-added tax. On the bank's side, losses, except accrued interest and penalties incurred as a result of the transfer, are considered ordinary losses. Losses within two years after the transfer of NPAs may be carried over for a period of five consecutive years.

Judging from the market's response to the law, the tax incentives granted by the law are attractive, but not attractive enough. Investments, especially as huge as envisioned by the SPV Act, are not driven purely by tax incentives. Potential investors interested in distressed property face high risks, so they expect high returns.

There is also some level of uncertainty on the part of the investor on how hard it will be to tap the tax exemptions. A glance at SPV Act's IRR reveals the administrative red tape and legal issues investors will face.

Moreover, SPV incentives are time-bound. Investors have a tight time frame to work with. SPVs must register within 18 months from the start of the effectivity of the IRR. Transfers of NPAs from financial institutions to SPVs enjoy the incentives for two years from this date as well. Transfers of NPAs by SPVs to third parties enjoy the perks for a period of five years from start of operation. Working within these strict parameters is not helped by a property market that is hardly picking up.

The sheer number of laws recently passed affecting the banking industry is a clear sign that in theory, Congress sees the bigger picture. The vitality of the financial sector is inextricably linked to the vitality of the Philippine economy. In practice, however, once the laws are implemented, the overall policy approach to revitalize the banking sector is thwarted by the competing needs for additional revenue, restrictions on foreign direct investments, and a business environment that is difficult to maneuver.

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Editor Louie C. Camino

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Gary V turns 40, marks 26th year

By Irene C. Perez

"SHE'S pregnant. What now?"

That was the problem of Gary Valenciano, who was then 19, his girlfriend, *colegiala*-model and Music and Magic singer Angeli Pangilinan, and their entertainment directors just weeks before Gary V's first major concert almost 20 years ago.

Having a family could have ruined Gary's matinee-idol packaging, but he and Angeli took the plunge and had the baby.

"Family is the priority," Angeli, who is also Gary V's manager now, is saying. "Sure, there were times when we wanted to call it quits, but hey, here we are."

Today is a grand day for the Valenciano family. Gary, the country's most famous diabetic, turns 40, and husband and wife mark their 20th wedding anniversary. This year, too, Angeli marks her 25th anniversary in show business, and Gary celebrates 26 triumphant years against juvenile diabetes. Gary has been a diabetic since he was 14.

"When we were in Hawaii last June, Gary had an attack," recalls Angeli. "Three hours later he was performing. We realized that life is short and Gary is too precious. There is too much to be thankful for."

The concert "Gary V...Thankful," set tonight at Araneta Coliseum, is a show of that gratitude.

Frustrated and alive

"Mr. Pure Energy" is Gary V's other name. For two decades, people have seen him dance, bounce and, as the title of one of his hits says, shout for joy.

"Many people don't know it is a very severe type of illness," Angeli says of her husband's illness. "He has attacks all the time."

She says Gary would have been an international star by now had it not been for the sickness, "but I'd rather have him frustrated and alive."

Gary was one of the OPM frontrunners during the '80s, when balladeers ruled and the local music industry was on a boom.

"With all due respect to Imelda Marcos, the golden age of OPM was during her time," ac-

GARY V/ C3

"PURE ENERGY." Gary V has been married for 20 years.

FAMILY FIRST. "Stage mother" Angeli with kids (from left) Gabriel, Paolo and Kiana

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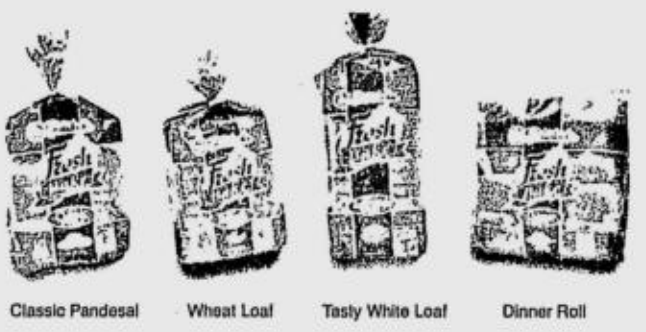

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You love adventure and unusual experiences. Because you want a lot out of life, you live in a "bigger than life" way. You adore whatever is unique, unusual and undiscovered. Sports, the entertainment world and children are dear to your heart. Your focus this year is on your closest friendships and partnerships. **Birthdate of:** Andy Warhol, pop artist/avant-garde filmmaker; Lucille Ball, comedian/actress; Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Now is the time to push for what you really want at work. Go for the brass ring! Don't take "no" for an answer. Go after what you want.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a great day for financial speculation. You feel creative, romantic and very happy. You can help children and young people today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have big plans for real estate, domestic holdings, family businesses and your own home scene. Be positive. But don't overextend yourself, either.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're unusually persuasive today! You can convince someone that day is night. Be careful not to get too obsessed about a particular idea. It's easy to do this today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Many of you can make some serious money today. If you have any bright ideas about how to boost your earnings, today is the day to go for it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This time in your life might represent the culmination of a long drive for success or something that you wanted to achieve. Now the proof is in the pudding.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Be careful about power struggles with the government or large institutions today. You could lose. Lots of wild energy is out there right now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't be afraid to ask others for help. Perhaps you have to enlarge your goals to encompass the goals of a group? If so, then make your success the success of others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): There's powerful energy out there today. It can be used for good or for bad. Don't try to coerce anyone into doing anything. If somebody tries to do this to you, resist with all your strength.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Fanaticism is a sure sign that something is rotten in Denmark. That's because a good idea can sell itself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might have an opportunity to use the wealth or resources of others to completely transform something in a way that benefits everyone. If you can do this, bravo!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might feel an almost ruthless desire to get ahead today. But don't cut any corners. As ye sow, so shall ye reap. Kindness and virtue bring happiness and vice versa.

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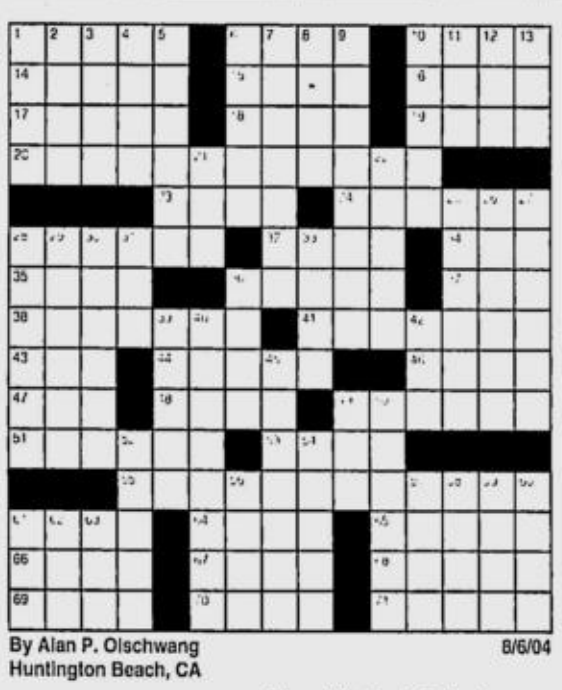
58 Sicilian volcano
59 Absorbed-dose units
60 Latin being
61 Took the cake
62 Lawyers' org.
63 Six in Roma



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

8/6/04

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

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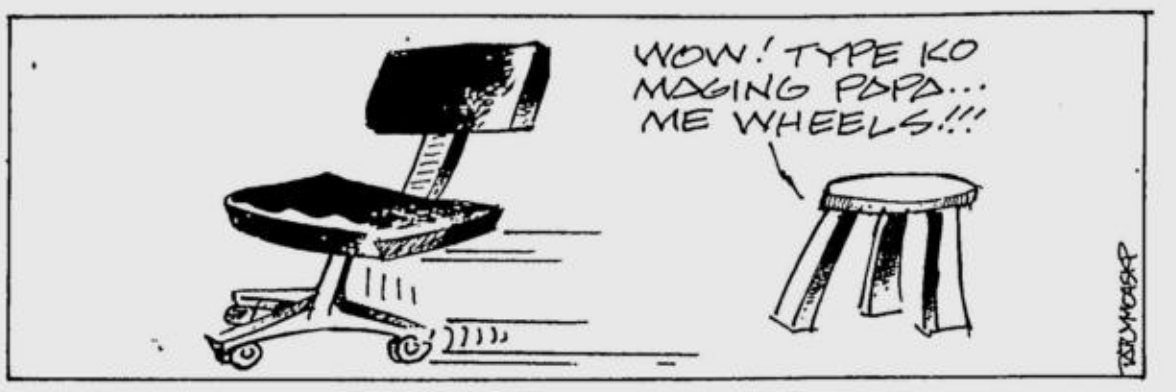
8/6/04

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



Downbeat view of the future

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

BEING a fan of **Isaac Asimov**'s sci-fi tales, I looked forward to seeing "I, Robot," the new cinematic distillation of Asimov's futuristic fantasies starring **Will Smith.**

My eagerness was initially rewarded by the production, which regales viewers with stunning digitally created visions of the near-future.

From simple shots of streets in which both people and robots matter-of-factly go about the day's business, to visions of "intelligent" highways where self-driven cars whiz to their destinations in the blink and wink of a sci-fi eye, "I, Robot" makes the magical appear unremarkable.

But savvy viewers know that a lot of time, creativity and money went into each of those effects, so the production's aw-shucks modesty is charming and disarming, winsome and winning.

Later, the movie goes into a philosophical tangent when it explores the darker ramifications of the move to integrate robots into the day-to-day lives of their human masters.

The exploration is similarly inveigling because it adds a new layer to life as we've known it thus far, possibly challenging and even contradicting the principles we hold dear.

Things take a disturbing turn when an advanced robot is created that appears to have a mind of its own, and is even capable of committing a crime—and not just any crime, but the murder of its creator.

Talk about philosophical ramifications, this "renegade" robot is particularly disturbing because it is the robotic equivalent of man's "murder" of God, a shocking notion that exercised the mental and moral muscles of some great writers and artists many years ago.

The concept is especially distressing because it challenges a basic relationship that humankind has made one of its major hallmarks and foundations.

Unfortunately, when "I, Robot" comes up with its updated, futuristic version of this great man-God conundrum, the film's makers predictably opt to view the situation with a decidedly jaundiced and morbid eye.

This is par for the desultory course for sci-fi movies, which like to generate tension and conflict by stressing a downbeat view of the future.

One would think that inventions and new ways of doing things would result in a better and happier life for everyone, but most sci-fi movies are congenitally pessimistic, and that's all to the bad.

"I, Robot" is even more cynical than usual, and overwhelms us with its depiction of armies of advanced robots exterminating earlier models, so they can't be opposed in vanquishing the human race, and establishing an electronic dictatorship over the entire planet.

To the cinematic cynics involved in this production, we say: "Stop, please. Give the future and sci-fi buffs like us a break!"

Despite this depressingly downbeat view, however, "I, Robot" is still viewable if the moviegoer chooses to concentrate on its stunning digital marvels, period. All else is petulant pessimism. What have robots done to us that we should be in such mortal dread of them?

'Easy English' seminar

CORBAN Daycare and Tutorial Center will hold an Easy English seminar starting Aug. 8 and 15, from 2 to 5 p.m. The seminar will be held for 10 consecutive Sundays, for a total of 30 hours.

It will focus on English conversation, grammar, vocabulary building and pronunciation. Call 842-6665.

'Is Anybody Out There?'

RECENT discoveries in outer space have prompted scientists to reconsider their notions regarding the "impossibility" of extraterrestrial life. CNN's space correspondent, **Miles O'Brien**, joins the quest in an hour-long "CNN Presents" investigation, "Is Anybody Out There?" airing at 8 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 7.

O'Brien takes viewers on an eye-opening odyssey to Chile's arid Atacama Desert, behind the scenes at Nasa's Mars Mission Control, and to Yellowstone National Park's acid-filled yet living springs.

He also gleans secrets from one of the world's leading "planet hunters," and journeys to Earth's largest radio telescope in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, to witness the effort to make contact with a distant, intelligent civilization.

"Is Anybody Out There?" will be replayed on CNN at 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Aug. 8.

'7th Heaven'

THE EIGHTH season of the family drama "7th Heaven" unreels on Studio 23 at 7 p.m. on Aug. 7. It promises to be the most challenging ever for the Camden family after son Simon figures in an accident.

Later, Eric takes up activist causes, Annie comes to terms with her ailing father, Lucy contends with life as a newlywed, Ruthie goes through puberty, and everybody hustles to find people to mind the twins.

Jay-R's 'Gameface' tour starts

JAY-R

ARNEE

SHOW TIME

JAY-R, the "prince of R&B," is on a nationwide concert series dubbed as the "Jay R Gameface Concert Tour," which kicks off today at the Tarlac State University.

Jay-R's hit single, "Bakit Pa Ba?," has propelled his debut album from Universal Records to platinum status.

In Tarlac, he will perform with a live band and dancers, and special guests Arnee and stand-up comedian Trizsa.

Regularly seen on "SOP" and "Love to Love," Jay-R is now finishing his second album.

The Gameface concert is produced by DVM Entertainment Inc., ALV Events International and Popoy Caritativo, with Sun Cellular and Bench. Local sponsors in Tarlac are dwXT 96.1 pop station and Sun Garden Hotel. Tickets are available at Tarlac State University Business Center, Copperchino Restaurant, Bench in Magic Star Mall, Hair Spa N FX Salon and Odyssey record bar.

The next stop of Jay-R's Gameface concert will be at Klownz Angeles City on Sept. 10 and the Lucena Convention Center, Lucena City, on Sept. 17. For inquiries, call Chino at 374-1361, 415-0373 or (0917) 453-2427.

DID YOU KNOW...

Maxene Magalona, one of the stars of Gil Portes' latest work, "Beautiful Life," was seen shopping alone for school supplies just like any ordinary student at the National Bookstore on Katipunan in Quezon City last Tuesday.

Gary V turns 40, marks 26th year

From page C1

knowledges Angeli. "There was very strict implementation of the rule that at least four OPM records should be played by radio stations per day, and she concocted all kinds of projects, bringing all kinds of shows to the provinces, encouraging a lot of people."

In the late '80s, Gary's songs "Take me Out of the Dark," "'Di Bale Na Lang" and "Sana Maulit Muli" were staples on the airwaves. The '90s was a rather slow era for him as he refused to enter TV because of his health.

Gary is a known perfectionist, whether he's playing an instrument, producing records or arranging songs.

"He sees every single thing," his wife says. "You can ask all the musicians in the Philippines and they'll tell you it's a challenge but it's inspiring."

Renewed Christians

There were times when his artistry generates conflicts between husband and wife, or artist and manager. Gary, she says, tends to create music that appeals more to the upper class and won't sell to the *masa*. Angeli ends up translating his English compositions into Filipino, like the now classic "Sana Maulit Muli."

"Once in while, I'm like, *puwede na 'yan* (That will do). I'm *masa*, Gary has always been more AB. The guy thinks in English and writes better in English. I had to court him to record "Pasko Na Sinta Ko," which was the biggest thing in UP. He said he never heard of it. I told him that it would be a hit!"

"THANKFUL." 19 years a renewed Christian

There are times, she says, when Gary refuses to sing his classics and would rather do some pieces that she says nobody knew.

"There was this time he didn't want to sing 'Sana Maulit' and "Di Na Natuto' in Australia," she says. "But they turned out to be the most applauded numbers."

Gary V and Angeli have been "renewed Christians" for 19 years now, with Gary risking being stereotyped as a "praise artist."

"It's not much of a restriction as it is a conviction," says Angeli. "A lot of people may find it preachy, but if you have a husband who could bike 33 kilometers even with an illness, how can you not be thankful and tell people that prayer works?"

Gary has also been the national ambassador of goodwill of Unicef for five and a half years now. He's working on a children's album and will be donating his artist's royalties to Unicef.

"We challenge people to think child-friendly," says Angeli.

Stage mom

With both Gary and Angeli in show business, their kids Paolo, 19, Gabriel, 16, and Kiana, 11, practically eat, breathe, live show business

"I want Kiana to be a doctor to take care of her dad," says the mother, "but what can I do, she wants to sing."

Pressure is an understatement for what the three are experiencing as Valenciano children, but Angeli says it is worse for Paolo. People have been known to come up to her and say her son Paolo can't sing like his dad, can't dance like his brother or have a singing award like his sister.

Like any other mother, Angeli admits she can be pretty fussy when it comes to her children. "I don't care if they call me a stage mom," she jokes.

Tonight, when the three children perform with their father on "Gary V...Thankful" at the Araneta Coliseum, which starts at 8 p.m., Angeli will be a very nervous mom. But like Gary V, she has much to be very thankful for—their 20th wedding anniversary, his 40th birthday, and her own 25th year in show business.

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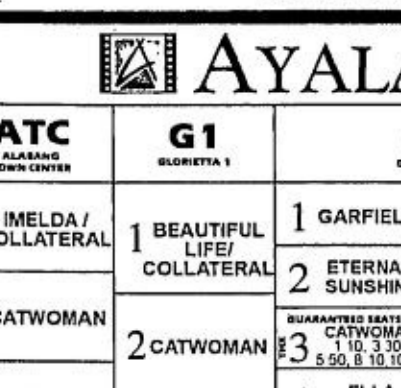
G4 (Glorietta 4): 1 GARFIELD; 2 ETERNAL SUNSHINE; 3 CATWOMAN 1 10, 3 30, 5 50, 8 10 10 30; 4 ELLA ENCHANTED; 5 IMELDA; 6 ALONG CAME POLLY/ COLLATERAL; 7 I, ROBOT
GB1 (Greenbelt 1): 1 CATWOMAN 12 30, 2 50, 5 10, 7 30, 9 50; 2 I, ROBOT 12 10, 2 35, 5 00 / COLLATERAL 7 05, 9 40
GB3 (Greenbelt 3): 1 CATWOMAN 2 00, 4 20, 6 40, 9 00, 11 20; 2 IMELDA / COLLATERAL 1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 8 05, 10 40; 3 GARFIELD 1 45, 3 30, 5 15, 7 00, 8 45, 10 30; 4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 7 30, 9 30, 11 30; 5 I, ROBOT 1 30, 3 45, 6 00, 8 15, 10 30
ACC (Ayala Center Cebu): 1 GARFIELD; 2 PRINCE & ME; 3 THE CURSE; 4 CATWOMAN; 5 ELLA ENCHANTED

SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW



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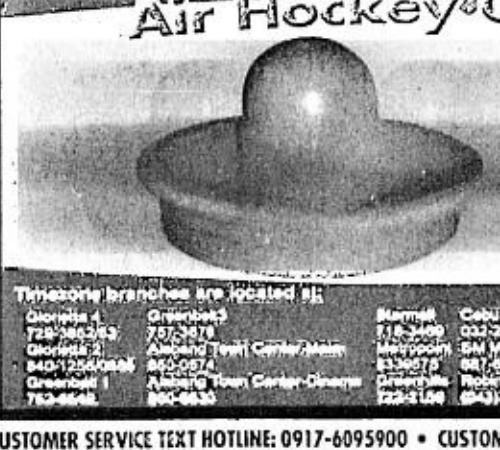

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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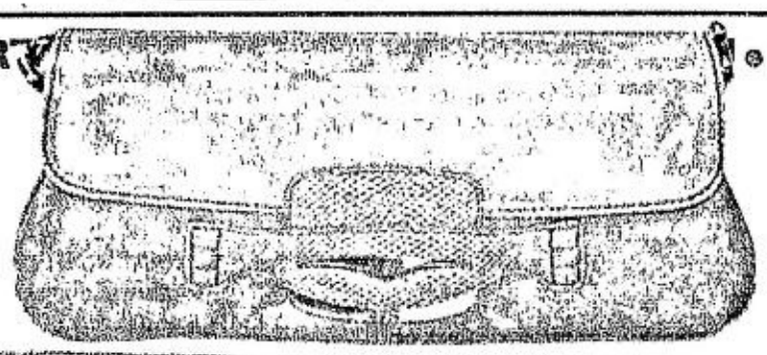


PHOTOS: CHELO B. FORMOSO

Italian leather goods vanguard Tod's seeks to walk tall in the region

No longer a toddler in Asia

By Chelo Banal-Formoso

ARE there still fashionistas out there who don't know that Tod's is an Italian brand of luxury leather goods? That it's neither American nor British?

CATWOMAN Halle Berry completes her look with a Tod's crocodile skin "Keeper" clutch in sage green from the 2004 fall-winter line.

Increased awareness of the brand may be credited to Tod's growing presence in Asia and its current advertising campaign that evokes the theme "Charming Italian stories" in the glossies and on billboards.

Tod's sales in the Far East climbed by 41 percent last year so, clearly, the company is not just toddling along in the region.

In fact, Tod's executives flew to Hong Kong recently to socially mix with the lifestyle media from Hong Kong, Indonesia and Philippines after the unveiling of their 2004 fall-winter collection.

It was a calculated move, and one that definitely had to be made, considering that Tod's was playing catch-up with premier couture labels Giorgio Armani, Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior and Prada, each of which has built its regional fashion forts in Hong Kong and holds an annual meet-and-greet with the Asian media.

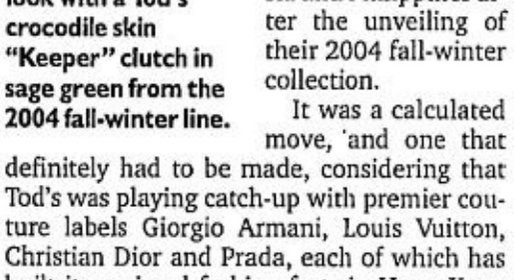
The Hong Kong unveiling came at the tailend of a hectic tour of China, the fastest-growing retail market in the world.

According to wire reports, the Chinese as of two years ago were already spending US $75 billion just on clothes and accessories. That's billion, not million. And since China has a population of 1.3 billion and is enjoying an economic boom that seems unaffected by war, terrorism or any crisis elsewhere in the world, the amount must be even more staggering today.

It's no wonder Tod's is not content with its 16 stores in Japan, five in Korea, two in Taiwan, and one each in Shanghai, Singapore, Jakarta and the Philippines.

Can you believe that in tiny Hong Kong, Tod's has opened five stores? One explanation

NO LONGER/ D2



Tod's Lane Crystal suede penny loafer gets the rhinestone treatment for the fall-winter fashion season (above); Jill buckle bootie in sand leather (left)

PHOTOS: CHELO B. FORMOSO

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Christina Milian — Until I Get Over You — WINTONE GETOVER
Will Young — Love Is A Matter of Distance — WINTONE LOVEIS
Talk About Our Love — Brandy feat. Kanye West — WINPOLY TALKABOUT
I'm Shakin' — Rooney — WINPOLY IMSHAKIN
Ba't Di Mo Pagbigyan — King — WINPOLY BATDIMO
Sunday Morning — Maroon 5 — WINPOLY SUNDAYMORN
Harder To Breathe — Maroon 5 — WINPOLY HARDER
Friday I'm In Love — Dryden Mitchell — WINPOLY FRIDAYIM
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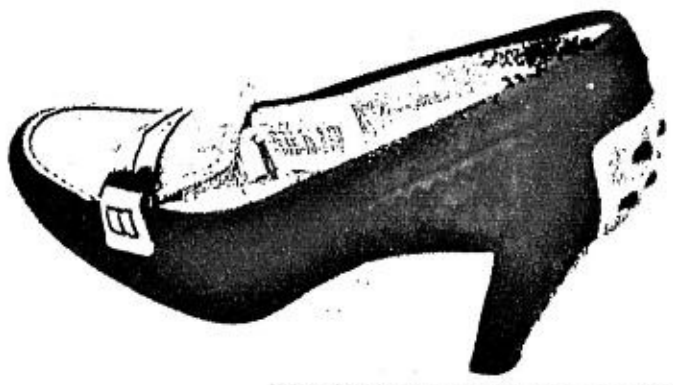
No longer a toddler in Asia



IMAGINATIVE combinations of colors (above) and material, as in crocodile and suede or nappa, update classic lines of Piccola bags (left); suede belt has T-shaped rhinestone buckle

PHOTOS: CHELO B. FORMOSO

From page D1

for that is the former British colony is, of course, a gateway to mainland China. Hong Kong gives Tod's great exposure to the Chinese in addition to what it earns in its Shanghai store.

Tod's devotees will be happy to know that in coming up with a sumptuous collection of shoes, bags, gloves and small leather goods for fall and winter, Diego Della Valle's workshop in the town of Casette d'Ete in Italy did not sacrifice craftsmanship and quality of the material for fashion.

Della Valle, who was among the luxury goods CEOs named in Time magazine's first annual Fashion Awards, picked up the cobbling trade from his grandfather Filippo, who started a small shoe factory that is now an international business that sells high-end shoes, bags, luggage, small leather goods and really gorgeous leather jackets.

The Tod's chair and managing director is the driving force behind the iconic pebble-soled driving moccasins—made of soft, supple leather coupled with cool hardware, not to mention 133 rubber bumps for traction on the sole and heel.

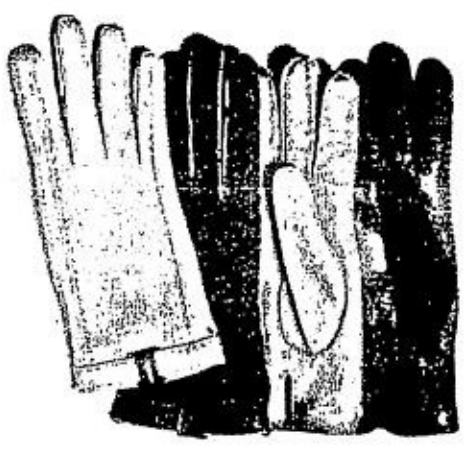
Ready for fall

Now Tod's driving loafer comes with rhinestones that match the tone of the uppers. The version in patent leather, with heel and fringes, is delightful with its retro touches. But the beauty and elegance of a classic are very much still there.

Although the Tod's driving shoes are a status symbol, its dressy boots in an assortment of length and hiking boots with the signature studs are fast going up the chic list.

The new collection makes use of fur, crocodile, iguana, calf leather and suede. And Tod's designers have created dramatic combinations of material, combining crocodile with suede and patent leather, calf leather with fur, etc.

The colors for the coming season—lilac, sage, powder pink, petrol blue, camel—are exactly what the gray days of winter need to perk up.



GLOVES in soft suede combined with nappa and lined in cashmere

CAPACIOUS Cleo shopping bag in chocolate lavoro suede and calf leather

SPOTTED in New York: "Catwoman" co-star Sharon Stone with Ravello bag in biscotto leather

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CAP the dinner they hosted in Hong Kong's happening restaurant-bar Aqua for Indonesian, Philippine and Hong Kong dia, the Tod's group (from left)—Stefano Sincini (CEO), Oscar Micucci (marketing head), Maurizio Beffa and Sabine nner—pose with Anthony Huang of Stores Specialists Inc., exclusive distributor of Tod's in the Philippines. CHELO B. FORMOSO

NEW Candy bag in cipria suede with leather shoulder strap also comes in Tod's fall-winter colors

EVERY Tod's shoe, from this slingback to hiking boots, is handcrafted to be cherished for its style, comfort and exclusivity.

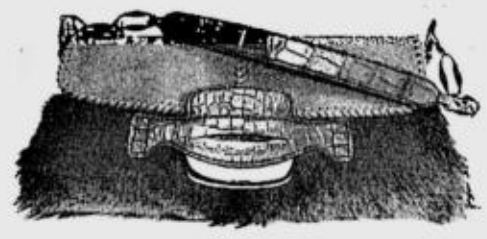
The "it" bag of the collection is the J.P.T., a showcase of saddle detailing and modern craftsmanship. Fashionistas will like it that it's available in large, medium and evening clutch. The other bags are already making waves in the celebrity circle. The shopping bags in the collection are what shopping bags should be—big in capacity and long on chic.

There are gorgeous bracelets in the collection—made of leather, of course—as well as scarves that are woven wonders in wool.

In the Philippines, Tod's is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists Inc. at the Tod's shop in Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati.

BRACELETS

FUR and leather make the most sumptuous combination imaginable for winter boot above, as do fur and crocodile for the bag below.



LUXURY is an elegantly tailored Tod's jacket in top-quality leather with cool hardware detailing.

SCARF in warm cashmere with multicolored stripes on lilac; also available in forest green, orange and teal

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SMART Kid Mall Blitz Schedules:

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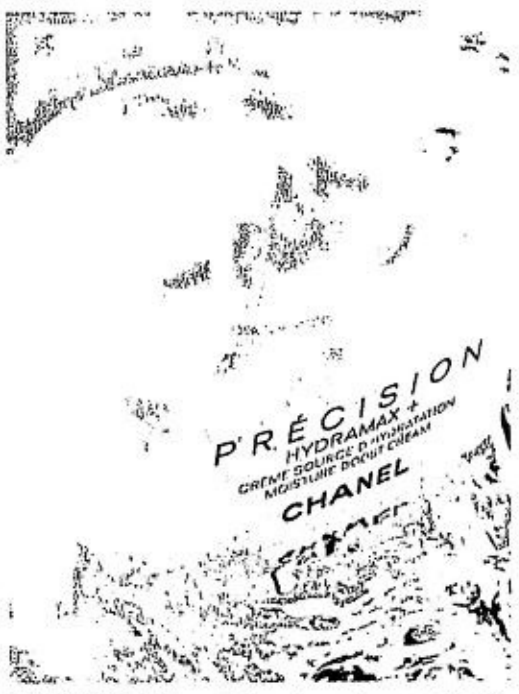


HYDRAMAX + moisture boost cream (top) and Hydra serum vitamin moisture boost (right)

Night-and-day moisturizing

Intense hydration is the secret to youthful-looking skin and Chanel's newly improved Hydramax+ is the best proof

DID you know that when we were babies, our body was composed of 75 percent water? That goes down to 65 percent when we reach adulthood and 55 percent in senior age.

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

You should be aware by now that moisture and oil are not the same thing. One can be dehydrated and still have acne-studded skin. If you ever woke up with a hangover or took a peek at your face during an airplane flight, you will know I'm right!

Intense hydration is the secret to youthful-looking skin. Hydrated skin is healthy skin. It heals faster, keeps wrinkles at bay, prevents breakouts by flushing out impurities, and looks fantastic.

The ultimate test is skin that's foundation- or powder-free. Truly hydrated healthy skin looks even, has small pores and no oily spots or dull patches, and best of all, should feel comfortable to the touch.

Chanel could not have proven this point to me any better when it invited me to Singapore for the press launch of Chanel Precision Hydramax +. Between cabin pressures from the airplane, lack of sleep, extreme temperature changes from air-conditioned rooms and the humid outdoors, my acne-prone skin just went crazy.

Not just fragrance and makeup

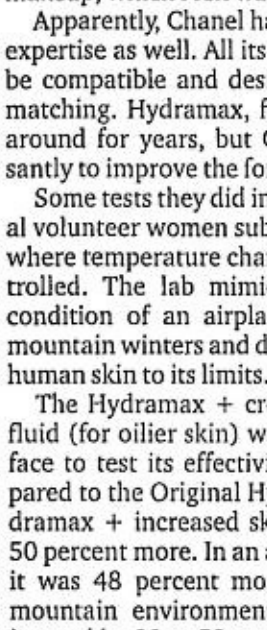
During the lecture presentation, we had two speakers: Marie-Helen Lair, head of Scientific Communication at Chanel, and Christelle Lasserre, Ph.D, head of C.E.R.I.E.S. Biology unit. Up until this time, Chanel's only point of interest for me was fragrance and makeup, which I felt was their forte.

Apparently, Chanel has built up its skincare expertise as well. All its products are made to be compatible and designed for mixing and matching. Hydramax, for instance, has been around for years, but Chanel worked incessantly to improve the formula.

Some tests they did involved keeping several volunteer women subjects in a wind tunnel where temperature changes were tightly controlled. The lab mimicked the pressurized condition of an airplane, as well as harsh mountain winters and dry desert heat, to push human skin to its limits.

The Hydramax + cream (for dry skin) or fluid (for oilier skin) was applied on half the face to test its effectivity. The results: Compared to the Original Hydramax formula, Hydramax + increased skin's water content by 50 percent more. In an airplane environment, it was 48 percent more, while in the cold mountain environment of Aspen, moisture jumped by 32 to 53 percent more, depending on the time of day.

None of Hydramax +'s ingredients contain lipids or greasy fuel, so breakouts and oiliness are eliminated. The silky texture can be attributed to silicones and primers. Chanel's labs have selected two plant-based active ingredients that can strengthen the structure of the cells of the stratum corneum (the uppermost layer that gets dehydrated) and interconnect them.



HYDRAMAX + moisture boost fluid

One effective ingredient is the Butterfly Lavender plant that grows around the Mediterranean and thrives in hot weather. Its extract boosts the synthesis of proteins essential for the cells' water balance. Another is the extract of Samphire, which stimulates the production of the enzyme that ensures the strength of the intercellular adhesive.

Road-test results

To road-test the product, we were given the entire Hydramax + range for full effect—cleansing foam, hydrating lotion, Hydra serum and the fluid for day and the cream for night.

Silica, which is found in both the fluid and cream, has a mattifying effect that seals the moisture in, so skin gets hydrated but not greased up. It has a most soothing marine-like spa scent.

I would apply it before sleep and in the morning before boarding the plane, waking up the next morning with soft supple skin, no eyebags and definitely no dark shadows in my face. I looked very rested and fresh, which is not my usual experience when I travel.

If you travel often, drink alcohol regularly, loves staying under the sun or has very dry skin, adding the Hydra serum after the lotion and before the cream is a quick fix that will give instant results.

If you are acne-prone like me, or you lead a relatively sheltered lifestyle, the Hydramax fluid is all you need. I am reserving the cream for colder weather and will limit it to my neck.

I went back to Singapore for another event two weeks later and went down the airplane confident that I looked my best. My secret weapon: Hydra serum with the fluid on top and underneath my foundation.

Chanel Hydramax+ is exclusively available at Rustan's.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4026, Series of 2004

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Daniel Go, Architect

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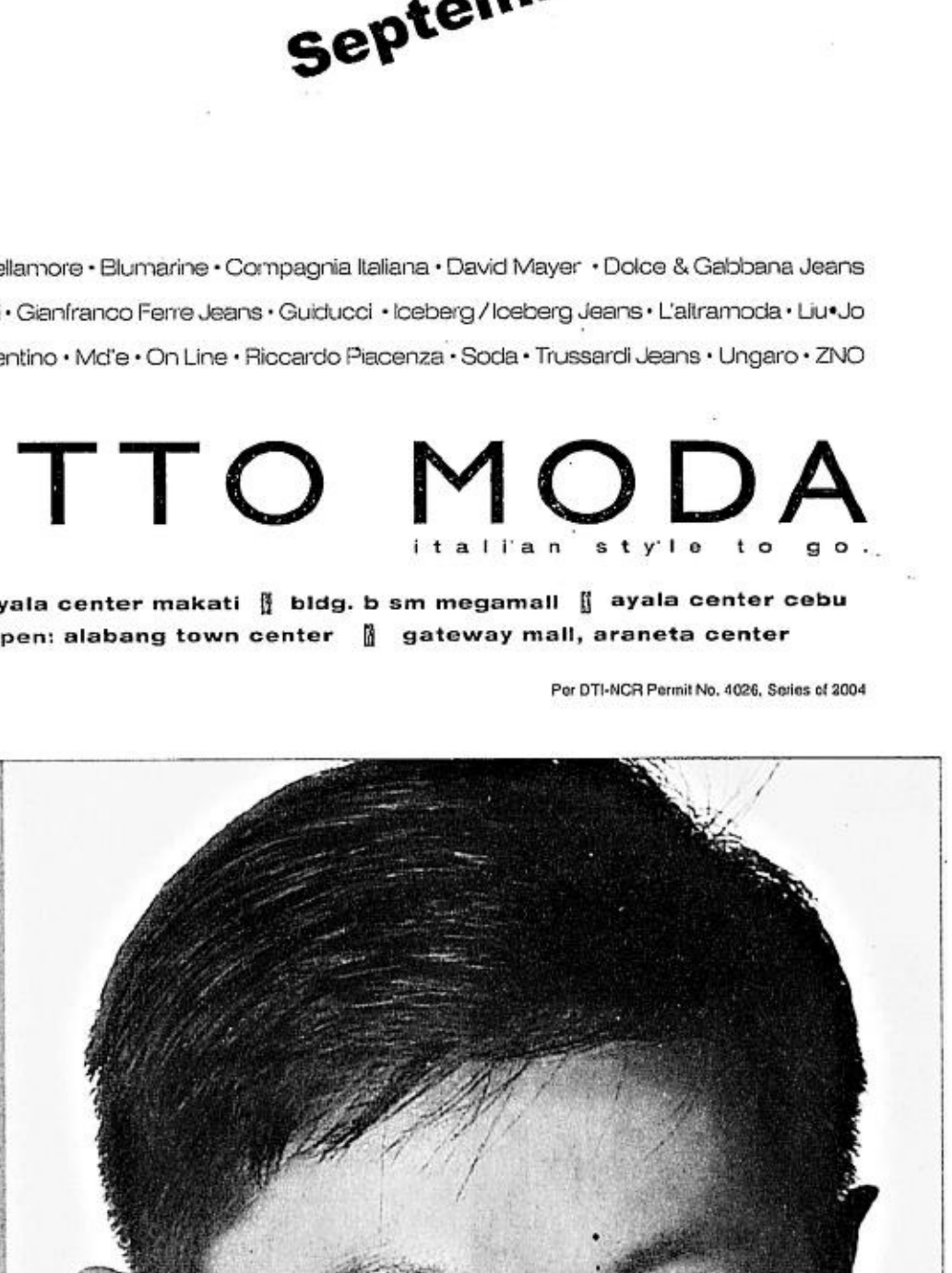

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THE DOYEN of them all, Via Mare's Glenda Barretto, with top jeweller Anita Chaw

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The foyer and reception area set the tone for the rest of the premises, as cascades of rich fabrics in jewel tones decorated the tables, chairs and mirrors, where we got our masks and sat under awe-inspiring chandeliers.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

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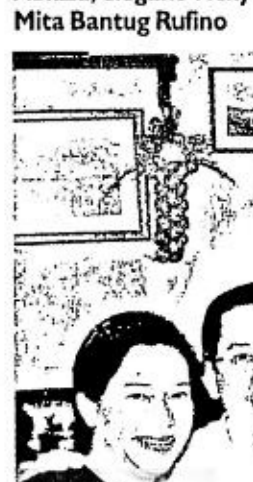

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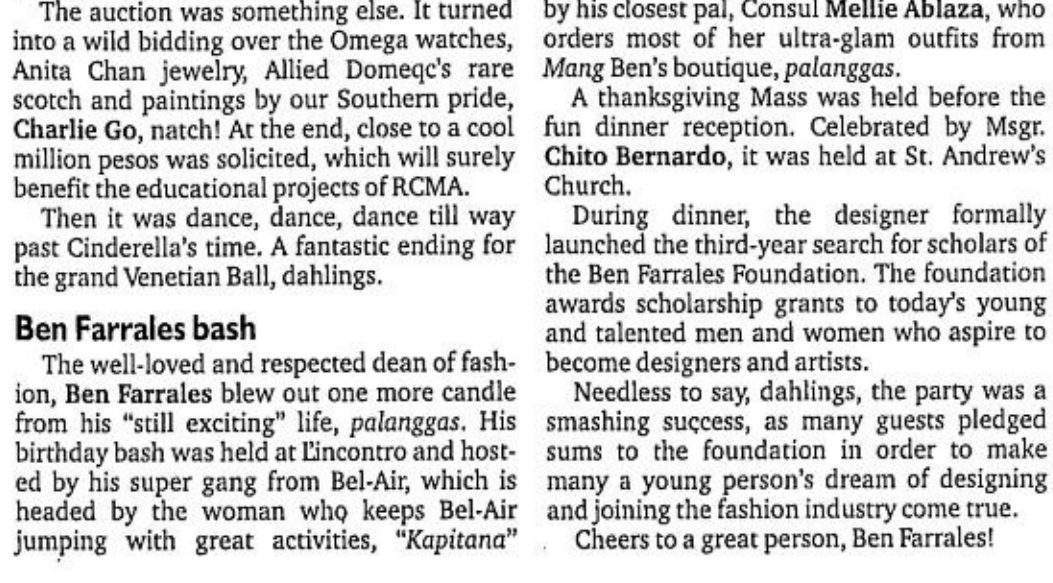

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NENA Cosgayon Casimiro

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Ben Farrales bash

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A thanksgiving Mass was held before the fun dinner reception. Celebrated by Msgr. **Chito Bernardo**, it was held at St. Andrew's Church.

During dinner, the designer formally launched the third-year search for scholars of the Ben Farrales Foundation. The foundation awards scholarship grants to today's young and talented men and women who aspire to become designers and artists.

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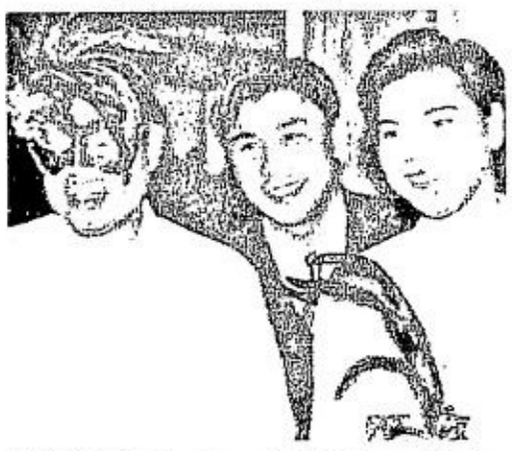

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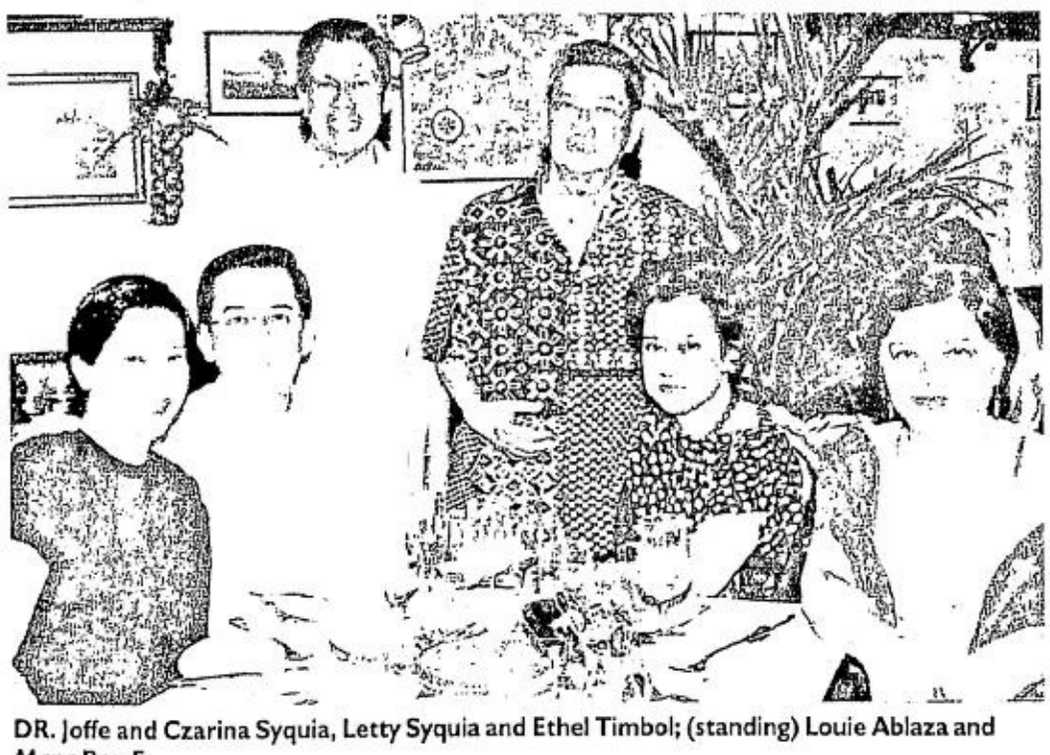

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Cheers to a great person, Ben Farrales!

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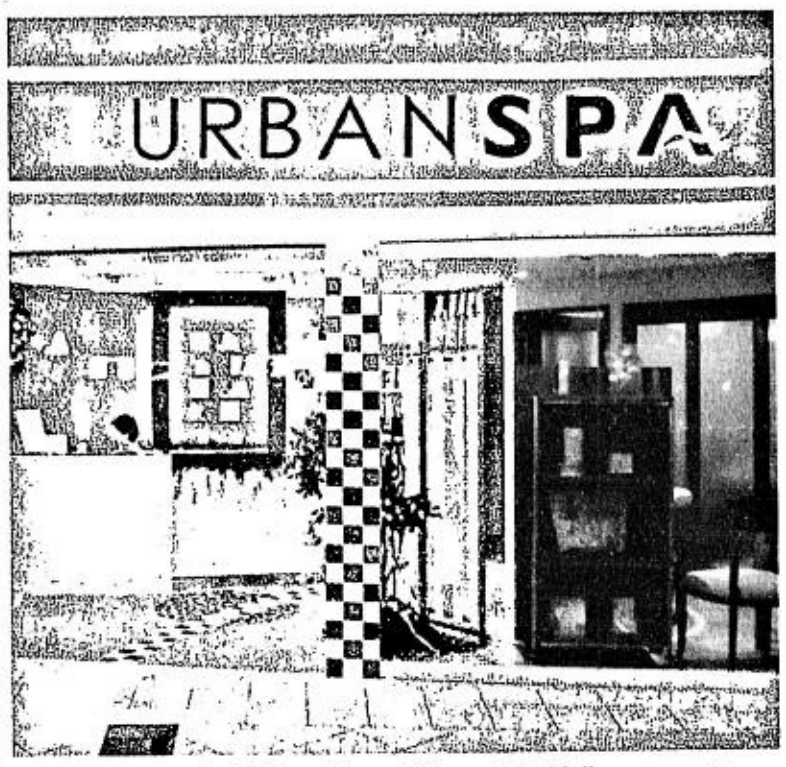


URBAN Spa at the Wellness Zone of Shangri-La Mall co-presents "Tell All" on Aug. 7 with HBO and I.Woman.

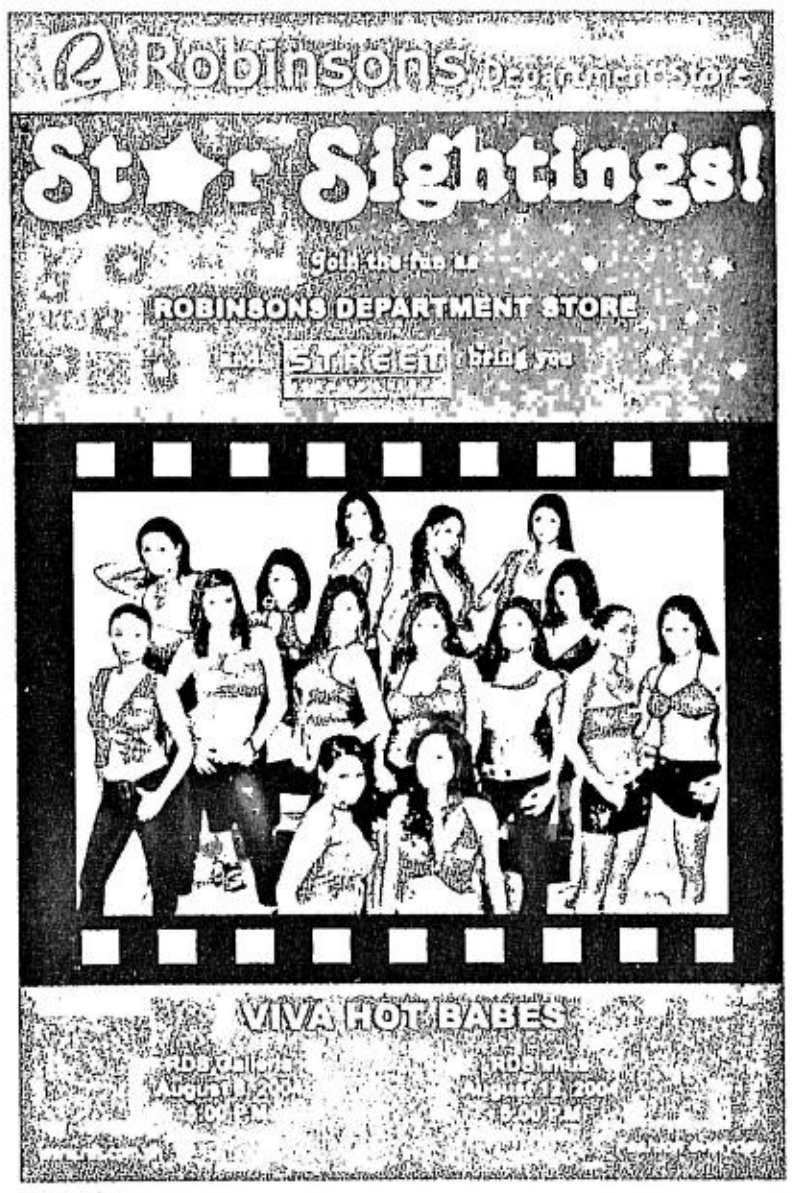
TESSA Prieto Valdes getting the Nirvana foot massage

Fun wellness workshop

LEARN the naked truth to a sexy and healthy lifestyle as Urban Spa, HBO and I.Woman bring you "Tell All," an afternoon of fun learning and excitement.

The event is hosted by Tessa Prieto-Valdes with Daphne Oseña-Paez, Teta Ortiz-Matera, Ginajane Grey and the dashing Paolo Abrera on Aug. 7, 2 p.m. at the Wellness Zone, 5/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City.

Those who'll join will get a chance to win "Sex and the City" baby tees and gift certificates. Call 6876195 to 96.



Seminar on motivating kids to study

GOINGS ON

THE COMMUNICATION Foundation for Asia (CFA) invites all parents to a seminar on Helping Your Child Become an Effective Learner. To be conducted by Dr. Dylan Dizon, the seminar will discuss how the brain works and how people learn and how to motivate children to study. The seminar is on Aug. 7, 9 a.m.-12 noon at the CFA Auditorium. Call 7132979/ 7147233/ 7132981 to 86.

CONCERT. Concert at the Park presents "La Orosa" on Aug. 8, 5 p.m. This dance tribute to Leonor Orosa-Goquingco, National Artist for Dance, features the Filipinescas Dance Company of College of St. Benilde, Chameleon Dance Company, Manila Ballet Repertory, Center for Movement & Music and the Vella C. Damian School of Ballet Inc. Admission is free.

PROMO. The Joji Ilagan Foundation Inc.'s Tumble Tots offers free trial sessions for the whole month of August. Starting today, children 6 months to 7 years old can experience going to an international preschool developing personalities through purposeful play. Tumble Tots is located at the G/F, Technoplaza 1, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City. Call 6876793.

SEMINAR. Corban Daycare and Tutorial Center will hold Easy English seminar on Aug. 8 and 15, 2-5 p.m. Call 8426665/ 8093050/ 0917-6297718.

PROMO. Abenson, in partnership with BPI Credit Cards, offers 0 percent installment up to 12 months on a wide selection of appliances until Aug. 8.

CLASSES. The Philippine-Italian Association opens Italian classes for beginners starting Aug. 10, 2-4 p.m. It will be held at the PIA Secretariat, 2/F, Zeta Bldg., 191 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati. Call 8151310.

BOOK FAIR. The 25th Manila International Book Fair kicks off on Aug. 11 at World Trade Center, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City. It runs until Aug. 15. Call 8960682/0661.

SALE. The Robinsons Mall will hold Sidewalk Sale on Aug. 13-15 with items offered at 70 percent off.

FORUM. The Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines will hold a forum on Creating a World-class Environment in the Library on Aug. 13, 1-3 p.m. at the Function Room B of World Trade Center, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, corner Roxas Blvd, Pasay City. Call 5526855/ 5249217/ 8106783.

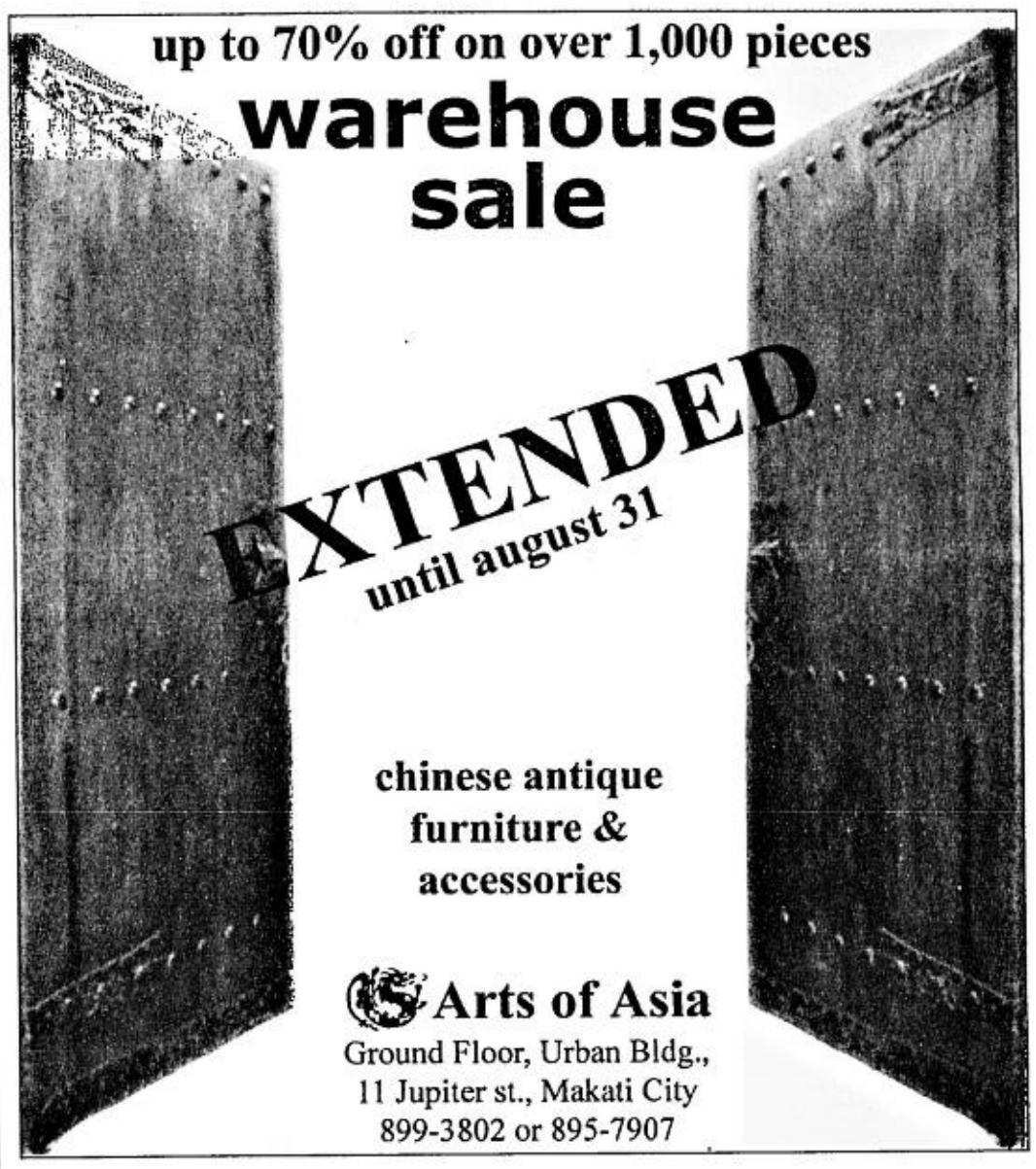
EVENT. The Bellevue Hotel presents "Sex and the City: A Final Toast" on Aug. 14 at the hotel's 20/20 Bar and Entertainment Center. The fashion extravaganza is for Alabang's Finest members and Asian Vision Cable Holdings subscribers. Call 7718181.

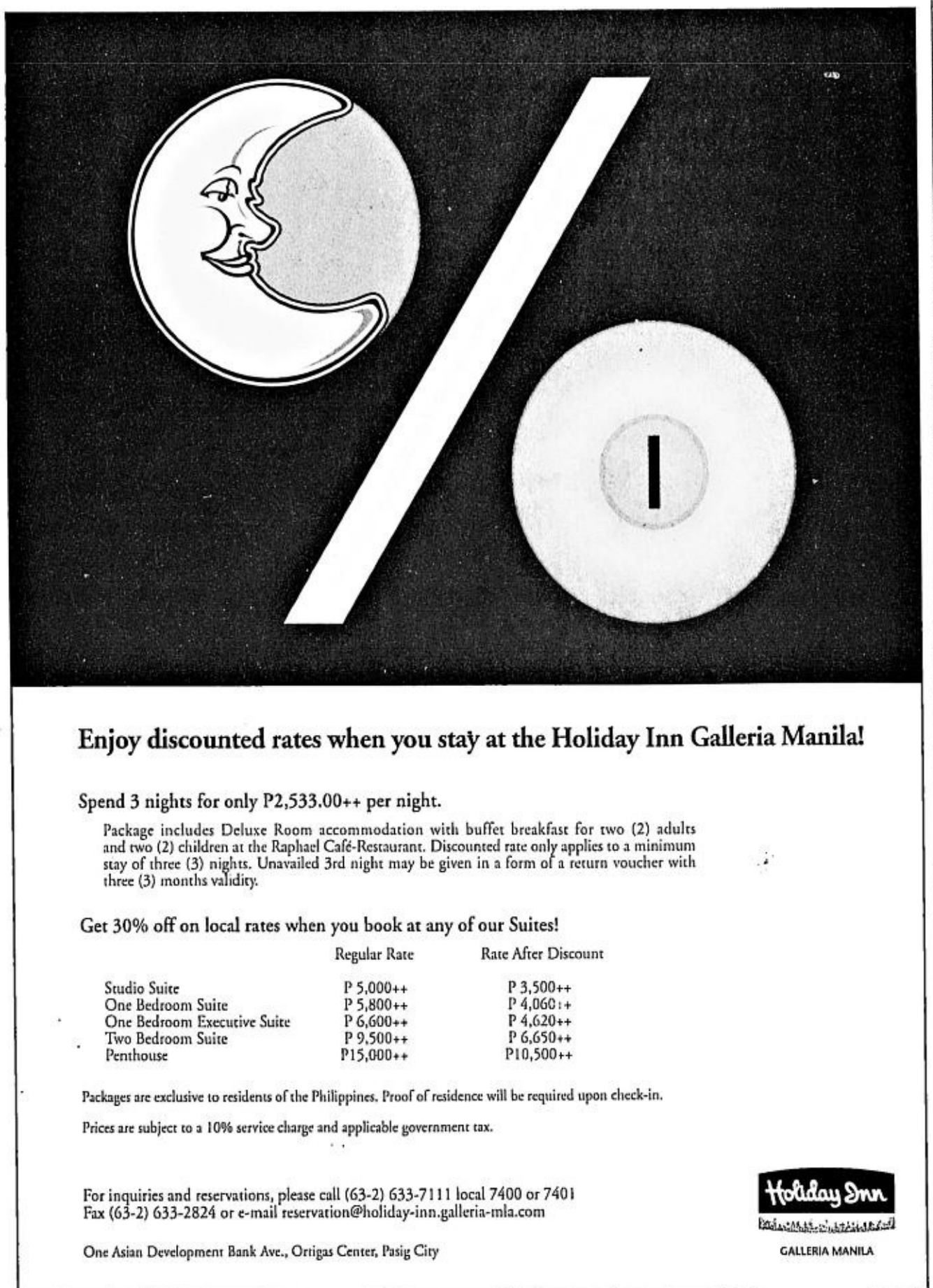
TEST. Applications for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test on Dec. 5 will be available starting Aug. 16 at the following venues: The Japan Foundation, Manila, 12/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., 811-6155 to 58; Philippine Nikkei-jin Kai Inc., Mamay Road, Lanang, Davao City, 234-2697 and 98/ (082) 235-1863; Consular Office of Japan, Cebu, 7/F Keppel Center, Samar Loop cor. Cardinal Rosales Ave., Cebu Business Park, Cebu City, (032) 2317321 to 22.

BOOK FAIR. The Association of Booksellers for the Academe and the Professions will hold the 7th Davao Book Fair on Aug. 17-20, 9 a.m.- 7 p.m., at Apo View Hotel, Davao City. Call (02) 9279858.

SEMINARS. The Center for Human Research and Development Foundation Inc. is holding two seminars at White House Filipino Grill, F. Ramos, Cebu City. The first is on Innovative Techniques for Teaching and Learning Values and Work Ethics for Educators and Future Filipino Workers, Aug. 23-24. The second is on Effective Hands-on Communications, An Essential Skill for the 21st Century, Aug. 25-26. Call (02) 9279858/ (032) 2540691.

SPECIAL TREAT. Anchor 1+ milk recently treated kids to an afternoon of fun as they met Blue, the Nickelodeon puppy, at SM Megamall and SM City North Edsa. Anchor 1+ milk products come with Blue's Clues freebies like bibs, utensils, plates and training cups. These are available at leading stores nationwide until Aug. 30.





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Packages are exclusive to residents of the Philippines. Proof of residence will be required upon check-in.

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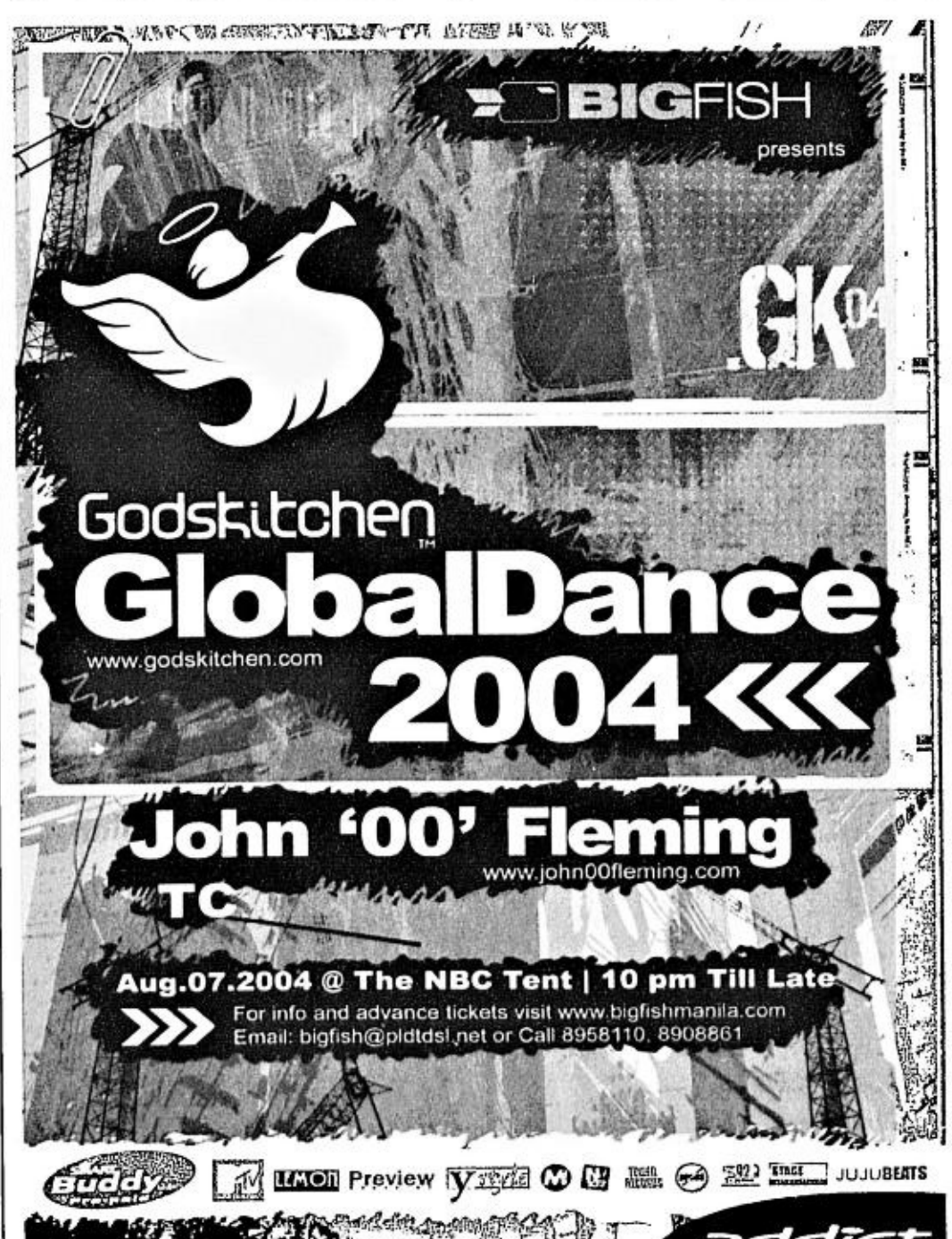
Holiday Inn GALLERIA MANILA



YOUR OWN RULES.

toni leviste

portrait #8 ©

TONI LEVISTE, with her champion horse Leap of Faith (the only friend she *doesn't* connect to on her Globe). World-ranked equestrienne, the only Southeast Asian rider ever to qualify for all three of the world's major showjumping competitions, including the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Globe Platinum member since 2002.

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Toni Leviste's always on the move: on a horse, on the road to her farm – or to an international competition. Calling for directions on the German *autobahn*, snapping pictures to MMS home, texting friends and family: everywhere she goes, Globe Platinum keeps Toni connected. She can even lose her phone without losing contact, because her Globe Platinum card has a spare SIM she can activate with one call. She's never had to use it, but isn't it's nice to know she can? Just one reason Toni Leviste can roam the world – but with G-Flex Platinum, she's always right at home.

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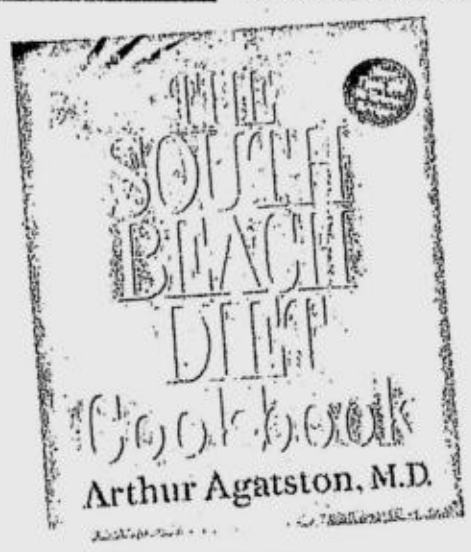
How South Beach Diet worked for me



It doesn't deprive me of fat, carbs and protein

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

IT'S been eons since I did serious dieting. That was when a publicist so endearingly asked me how many months I was on the family way when, in fact, I wasn't. I did well on Scarsdale. That was when that heavy-protein diet was the vogue, and I was almost a generation younger.

Now I don't recommend diets that inevitably tax your organs and give you falling hair (due to lack of nutrients). I believe Atkins, while effective, is not healthy. My body is also not diet-friendly for the simple reason that I need my sugar fix at a set time of day. At 5 p.m. my chocolate craving comes with clockwork precision. Like **Ino Sotto**, I can't live without desserts.

The past months, however, people couldn't stop talking about the South Beach Diet. Friends like **Jeannie Goulbourn, Menchu Katigbak** and **Carmita Francisco** swear by it. **Romina Urra Gonzalez** lent me the South Beach Diet book written by the diet creator, Dr. **Arthur Agatston.** I found it engaging, but more important, it made good sense and addressed the main deficiency of today's Pinoy diet: We love sweets and pasta, we don't love fiber. That's why we not only grow our belly, we also get diabetic. The South Beach Diet improves your blood chemistry.

A decade or so ago, the culprit was fat and cholesterol; egg/bacon was the villain. Today, the culprit isn't so much fat as the sugar and the processed foods we have too much of. Fat or cholesterol isn't bad per se; it is saturated fat or the bad cholesterol we should avoid.

The South Beach Diet is neither low carb nor low fat. It uses the right carb and fat.

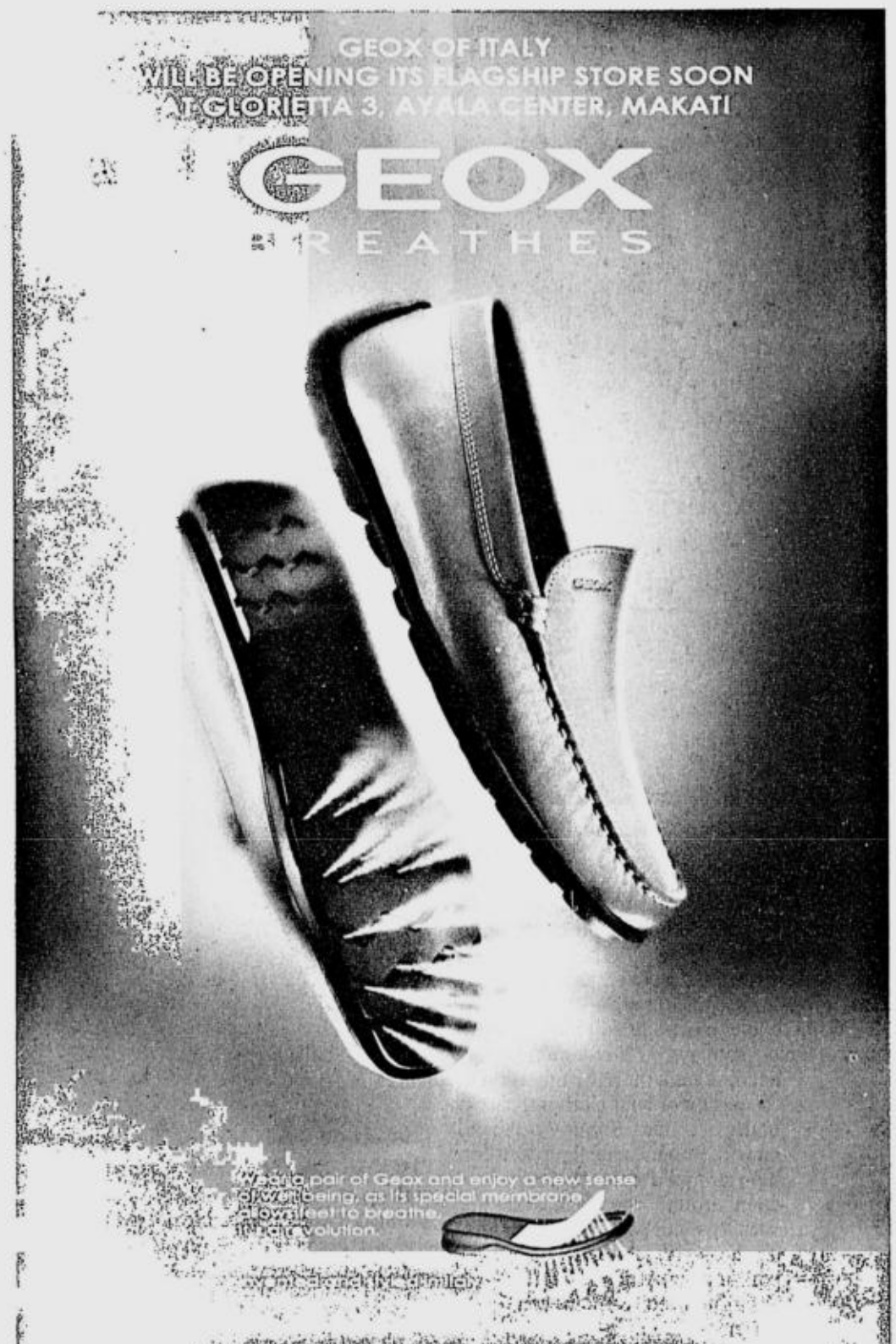
Agatston is a cardiologist who specialized in developing technology for cardiac imaging (pictures of the heart) and who, without meaning to, developed an eating regimen for his patients that became known as South Beach Diet, named after the place (South Florida) where he practiced. He was prescribing a right carb-right protein diet to his patients who then passed it on to friends, and before he knew it, even guys and girls in their 20s and mid-30s were following the diet just so they could get into their Speedos and string bikinis.

Three phases and no more belly

The main features of the diet are:

- It has three phases, phase one being the strictest when you have meats, veggies, seafoods, but no sugar and bad carb, only the right cheeses and whole grain bread. In phase one, you also have five meals a day—breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks in between. Phase two is when you start phasing in the carb. Phase three is the diet you can maintain for life.
- In phase one, which is two weeks, you can lose between 8 and 13 lbs even without exercise. (But I believe having regular exercise is as important as trying to lose weight.)

HOW/ F4



Dear Ate,

I have a lot of secrets and I want to share them with you. I think I'm in love again. Hindi kay mister, love ko na yun dati pa. Iba ito. Iba siya. Mas pinasarap niya ang buhay ko.

CHEESY CALDERETA

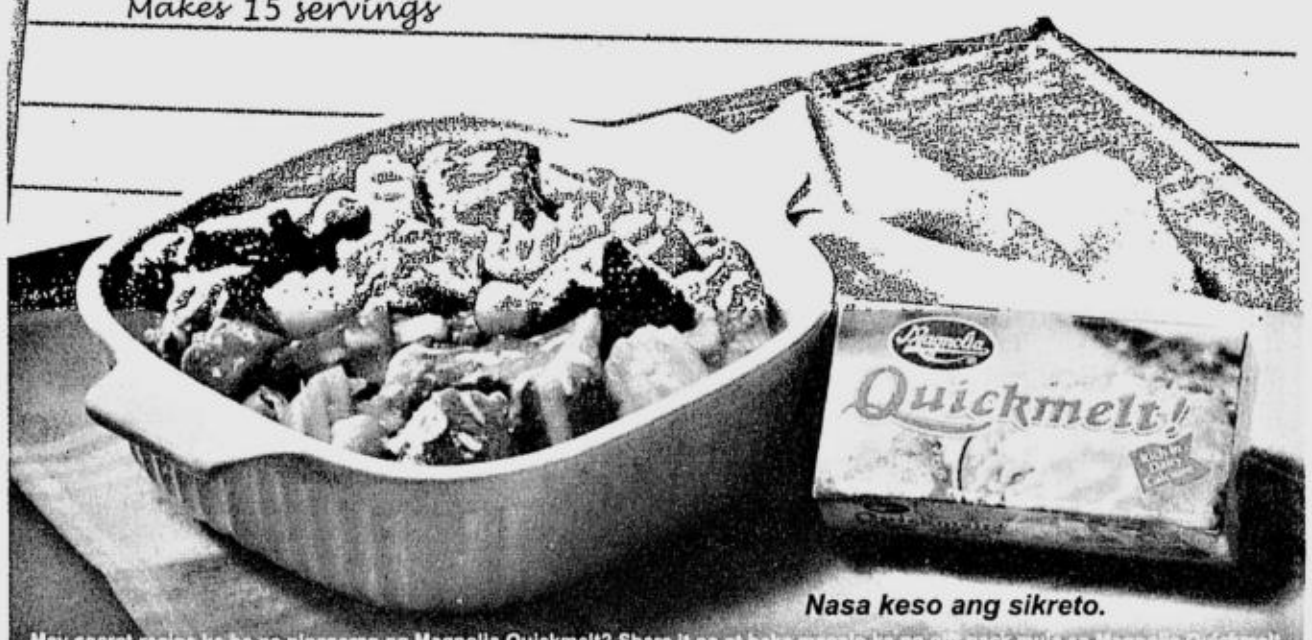
Ingredients:

2 tsp. Star Margarine
1 tbsp. Garlic, minced
1 kg. Monterey Beef Caldereta crust
6 cups Water
1 tbsp. Salt
1 tsp. Pepper
1 piece Bayleaf
2 tbsp. Tomato paste
2/3 cup Tomato sauce
1 Chili, chopped
2 tbsp. Peanut butter
1/4 cup Celery, sliced
3/4 cup MAGNOLIA QUICKMELT CHEESE, grated
1/3 cup Whole olives (optional)
1/2 cup Carrots, sliced

Procedure:

Saute garlic in butter. Add in the beef and stir fry just until brown. Pour in water, salt, pepper, and bayleaf. Simmer until the meat is tender. Add in tomato paste, tomato sauce, chili and peanut butter and cook for 5 minutes while stirring continuously to avoid lumps. Add grated cheese, celery, olives and carrots and simmer for another 5 minutes. Serve hot.

Makes 15 servings



Nasa keso ang sikreto.

May secret recipe ka ba na pinasarap ng Magnolia Quickmelt? Share it na at baka manalo ka ng gift pack mula sa Magnolia Quickmelt. Send it along with one empty box of Magnolia Quickmelt to Magnolia, Inc., Legaspi cor. Eagle Sts., Bo. Ugong, Pasig City.

Per DOH-BFAD No. 0672 S. 2004

ARE YOU IN OR OUT?

Find out at Greenhills Shopping Center's Mid-Year Bangketa Fair.

Shine like a star with this season's trendiest apparel at GSC's Mid-Year Bangketa Fair from July 16 - August 15, 2004. With over 1,000 stalls offering the hippest and most affordable clothes and accessories, you'll surely find everything you need to be in style. Now and always, at Greenhills Shopping Center.

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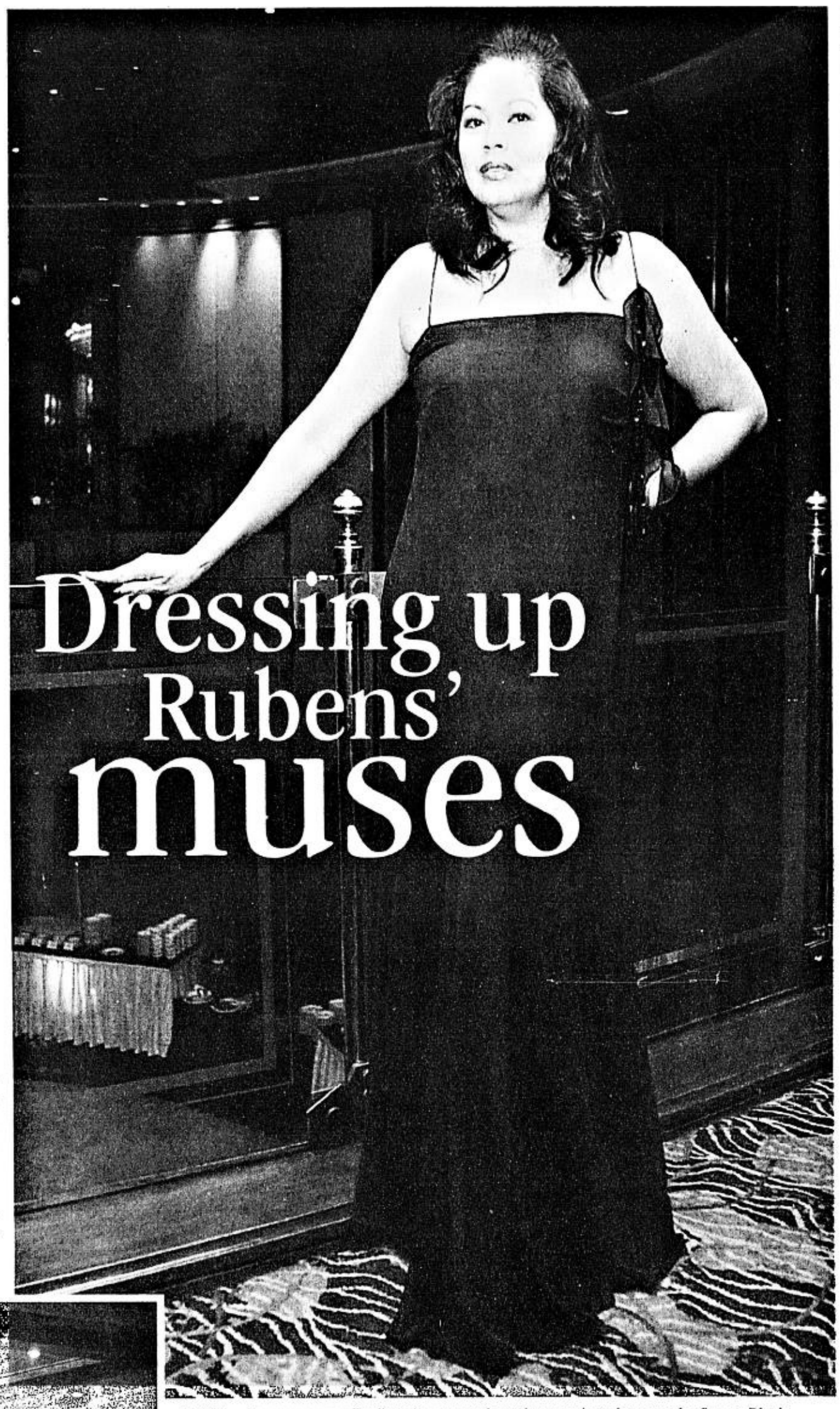
OPEN necklines, color blocking and A-line skirts are perfect for full-figured women. Fully beaded V-neck in pale pink and pastel gray matched with a pewter semi A-line skirt with bustle

Dressing up Rubens' muses

IF OPRAH Winfrey can look her stunning best, so can you. Nowadays, there really is no excuse for full-figured women to look plain, unattractive and downright dowdy, especially during special occasions. All you need is to keep a few simple tips and tricks in mind and to develop basic fashion sense. Match these with the right attitude and confidence and you simply can't go wrong.



DARK colors are generally slimming, as are long dresses that elongate the figure. Black chiffon spaghetti-strap gown

WEARING monochromatic colors or tone on tone will definitely elongate your figure and make you look slimmer. Dark gray linen tunic with elongated side slits with slim-fitting straight pants

A CORSET top will shape, mould and whittle down the waistline. Gold bustier and matching ball skirt in bridal satin

CHOOSE sheer or thin fabrics so you don't bulk up, and show off assets like great legs and sexy calves by wearing skirts. Apple-green stretch shell layered with an ice blue chiffon blouse, matched with a celadon skirt with an asymmetrical hemline

DON'T be afraid to wear color. The right cut and fit can make your full figure look slimmer. Pink chiffon blouson worn with a four-gored strapless gown

There are certain factors to consider when dressing to camouflage a full figure, one of which is choice of fabric. It's best to choose tightly woven, more structured materials like silk shantung or cotton linen, as these will hold its shape better. Stay away from clingy fabrics like silk jersey that hug and show off every curve and bulge. Flowing fabrics such as chiffon are acceptable though.

According to designer Ann Chavez, you must avoid the common mistake of piling on and covering up with an overabundance of fabric that will make you look bigger and bulkier. Neither should you wear clothes that are too loose, as the effect can be just as disappointing as overly tight clothing.

Color is another important factor. Generally, dark colors are slimming but don't let this stop you from wearing bright colors to express your personality and moods. Chavez says, "Don't be afraid of color. With the right cut and fit, a light or vibrantly hued outfit can make you look just as beautiful." She also suggests the use of monochromatic colors or tone on tone that will lengthen your figure.

Since your goal is to elongate your figure, Chavez advises the use of long dresses that are simple in cut. These will lengthen the body and make you appear slimmer. "Vertical lines or patterns in the form of stripes or in seams and cuts that are incorporated into a design will also lengthen your silhouette," she adds. Also, be very careful when choosing prints and remember that big prints are often times unflattering.

Chavez stresses, however, that fit is the most important consideration. "Clothes that fall properly on your body will look good no matter what," she says. At the same time, she encourages a bit more attention to the design of your clothing, particularly necklines. She advises women with Rubenesque figures to don blouses and dresses that are more open around the neck and face such as a V or square-cut neckline, as these will elongate the upper part of your body.

Full-figured women can wear sleeveless clothing, too. It's just a matter of staying within your comfort level. If you feel that you need to cover up your arms, then do so. "Opt for a light or sheer fabric that will not add bulk to your silhouette," recommends Chavez.

Wearing the right underwear is also advantageous. A full-support bra and girdle or tummy control panty can help streamline your full figure. Also keep in mind that it's best to accentuate your best features so you draw attention to these instead of your-not-so-desirable body parts. For example, if you have nice calves and ankles, wear a skirt that will highlight these assets.

You must also never underestimate the importance of good grooming. The right haircut, makeup and proper personal hygiene can help you look more pulled together and feminine. And of course, always choose clothes that are comfortable and suit your personality.

Chavez also has this to say: "Be open to new styles. Deviating from what you are used to might just give you a pleasant surprise." So, go ahead. Don't be afraid to have fun and experiment while being yourself and developing your own style.

E-mail the author at apsadvice@hotmail.com

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

PHOTOS: JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN
STYLING: IZZA GONZALES-AGANA
MODEL: DESIREE VERDADERO-ABESAMIS
CLOTHES: ANN CHAVEZ, TEL. 8432956/58
WATCH OUT FOR THE OPENING OF THE PURPLE CLOSET THIS OCTOBER AT THE WESTGATE CENTER, FILINVEST CORPORATE CITY, ALABANG
LOCATION: MANDARIN ORIENTAL, MANILA
SPECIAL THANKS TO CHARISSE CHUIDIAN

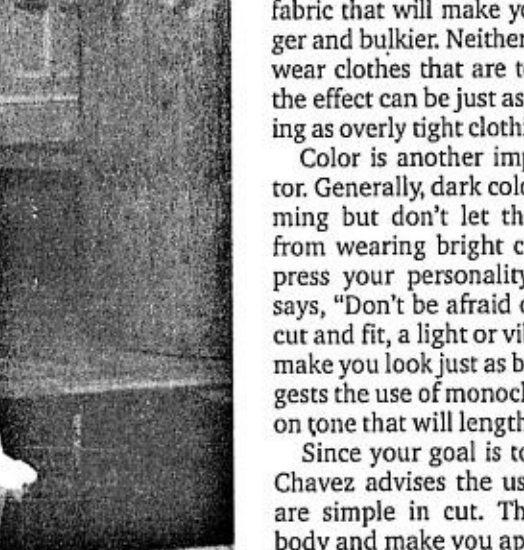
Store for plus-sized women opens Cebu branch

TUBBY, the first store to offer fashionable clothes and accessories to plus-sized women, opened recently its first regional branch in the Visayas at the second level of the Ayala Center in Cebu.

The 41-sq m store, the ninth Tubby branch, offers a wide selection to suit the different needs of plus-sized women.

Tubby also has branches at the ground floor of SM City North Edsa, second level of SM City Manila, second level of Festival Supermall, ground floor of SM Southmall, ground floor of Robinsons Metro East, ground floor of SM City Pampanga Annex 1, fifth level of Shangri-La Plaza Mall, and ground floor of Robinsons Place Manila.

The store plans to have a total of 40 shops by the year 2010.

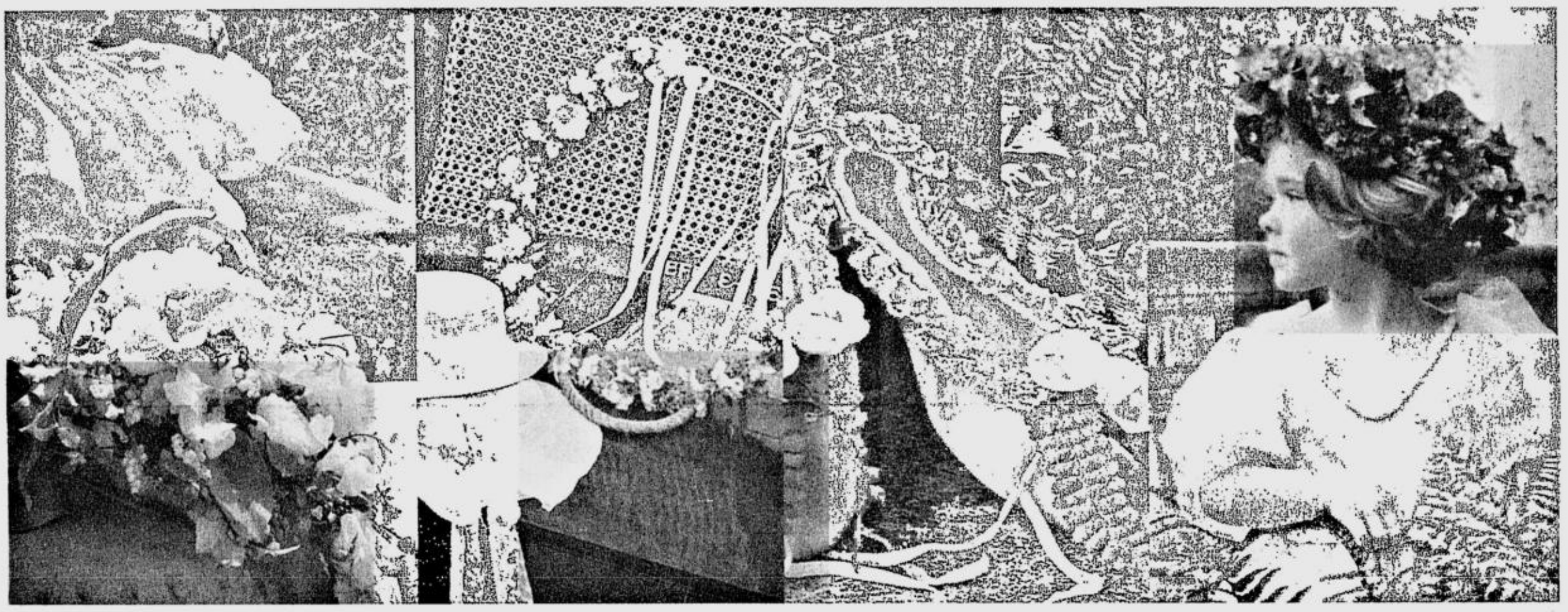


TUBBY has a wide selection of clothes and accessories to suit the different needs of plus-sized women.

Bridal Fête 2004

AT MAKATI SHANGRI-LA

Wedding Options for Today's Creative Couples



Sunday, August 8, 2004
Rizal Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La
10:00am – 9:00pm

Experience magnificent shopping options for wedding planning services, bridal gowns, invitations, flowers, cakes, wedding favors, musical entertainment, photography, honeymoon destinations, limousine services, spa and wellness programs for the radiant bride-to-be. Also, a Fashion Show that features the splendid and ornate gown creations of Delby P. Bragais, nominated as "Best Bridal Wear Designer" for the Mega Style Awards.

For more information, please contact Bernni Concepcion of MEET, Inc. at 426 0093 / 436 6580 or the Makati Shangri-La Events Management Department at 813 8888 extensions 7476 or 7475.

Makati Shangri-La
MANILA

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Wardrobe to wash away rainy-day blues

YOU don't need to look dreary when it's rainy. Here are a few rainy-day fashion suggestions from Robinsons Department Store.

Ladies can be cozy and warm without sacrificing style by choosing outfits that are fashionable yet sensible, like long-sleeved woven shirts in stripes or prints paired with a comfortable cotton skirt.

Complete the look with a brightly colored umbrella, trendy wet-proof bag and easy-to-trot sandals.

Energize an otherwise unexciting rainy day gimmick in clothing that defies the chill, like a nape-knot halter top. Pair it with a favorite cardigan and pants in warm fabrics like twill.

For men, ingenious layering is the answer. The basic layering rules are light on dark or plain on prints. For a simple, effortless look, standard sports shirts worn over casual long-sleeves and matched with all-weather denim pants is unbeatable.

Lastly, the perfect way to wash away the cold blues is to wear shirts in cold-biting colors like orange, red or mustard with bold prints and designs.

Everything you need to update your rainy-day wardrobe can be found at Robinsons Department Store. Visit www.rds.com.ph

STRIPED woven shirt and cotton knit skirt with side slits, Julia handbag, slip-ons and Robinson's umbrella; (inset) nape-knot halter top, twill pants and green cardigan, all from Liberte; shell bangle

Colors and prints for cloudy days

EVERYTHING'S bright and colorful at the SM Department Store.

Orange, red, yellow and pastels—baby pink, powder blue and mint green—have been splashed on tees that feature graffiti, animé, abstract and graphic prints.

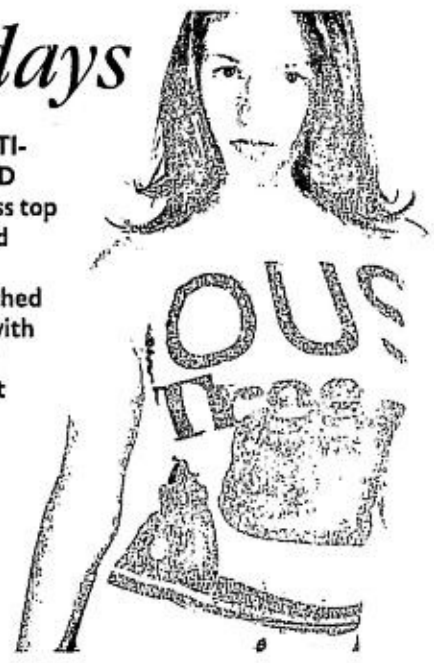
Layering, ruffles and stitched edging, mesh and ribbon detailing have been added to some pieces, while others have sequins, studs and beads.

The colorful tees are matched with equally bright-hued miniskirts.

The collection is available at the Girls Teens Wear Department of all SM stores.

GROOVY GAL. Graffiti-printed sleeveless top with ruffled edging

GRAFFITI-PRINTED sleeveless top with stud accents and stitched edging with a yellow miniskirt



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How South. . .

From page F1

• You can have regular helpings of meat, chicken, turkey, fish and shellfish, plenty of veggies, eggs, cheese and nuts.

• You can have dessert after dinner.

• The first two weeks is supposed to help you get over your cravings for sugar, bread, rice, potatoes. He writes, "Decrease the consumption of those 'bad' carbs, studies showed, and the insulin resistance starts clearing up on its own... Even the craving for carbs disappears once you cut down on their consumption."

• There's the good carb and the bad carb, the latter being the highly processed ones.

• It permits ample fats and animal proteins. He writes: "The low-fat regime's severe restrictions on meat were unnecessary—the latest studies showed that lean meat did not have harmful effect on blood chemistry."

• It's supposed to be good for your blood chemistry. This is where this diet is better than other diets—it's supposed to be good to your pancreas and other organs. It's supposed to improve your blood chemistry that'll benefit your cardio system in the long run.

• It stresses the importance of high-fiber food. For instance, if made to choose between orange juice and orange, he says, go for the fruit because of the fiber it brings. Modern industrial processing, he writes, "removes the fiber from these foods and once that's gone their very nature—and how we metabolize them—changes significantly, and for the worse."

• This diet reduces your belly. It almost zaps your "*puson*" and "*bilbil*."

Buy the book if you want to know more about the science behind the diet. To cut the story short, I tried it at first rather "informally," meaning I just followed the lists of the foods to avoid and to enjoy. In two weeks, I lost nine lbs —without feeling sluggish. That was when I realized this diet made sense and that I wanted to follow it, except there was a problem. I didn't know how to make its meal recipes. (I can't cook to save my life, to begin with.)

I began ordering from **Margarita Fores**. Margarita's staff (text **Donna**, 0919-5967996, or call 9133965) delivers South Beach meals every day. The meals follow those from the book. I'm on my 13th day—and I can zip up my old jeans without having to curse the world at large. Better, I don't have hunger pangs and haven't turned (completely) into a "South Bitch," as our **Monchef** warned I would because of hunger. The diet didn't slow down my tennis either.

If you want the "*lutong bahay*" recipes of South Beach Diet, chef **Bambi Sy Gobio** has them in the August Metro Magazine. Bambi's recipes include local favorites such as "*daing na bangus*."

I asked **Tina Juan** what she thinks of the South Beach Diet. She says like other diets it must be realistic to succeed. She suggests that you go to Phase 3 so you have greater chances of success, no matter if you lose only one or two pounds a week.

E-mail tsanjuan@skyinet.net

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text Feedback:
inquirer life name/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

FIDI members who will host the Cut-flower Congress: Beng Ongkiko, Cheng Chua, congress co-chair Charita Puentespina, overall coordinator Vicky Jimenez, Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Evelyn Lavinia and federation president Sally Leuenberger. Not in photo is overall chair Severino Mercado.

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Davao hosts 9th Floriculture Congress

THE 9TH FLORICULTURE Congress will be held Aug. 19-21 at the Royal Mandaya Hotel, Palma Gil St., Davao City.

Organized by the Federation of Cut-flowers and Ornamental Growers Association of the Philippines headed by Sally Leuenberger, the theme of this year's congress is "Continuing Business Discipline for Globalization." The congress is hosted by the Floriculture Industry of Davao Inc. (FIDI) as part of the activities during the annual Kadayawan sa Davao festival.

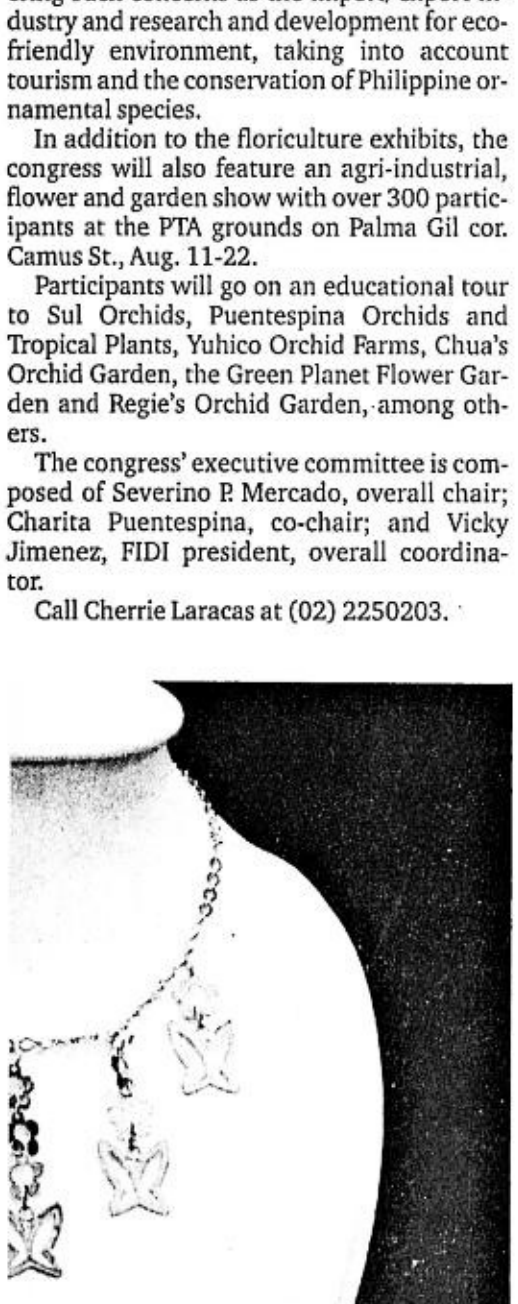
Several technical sessions will be held, covering such concerns as the import/export industry and research and development for eco-friendly environment, taking into account tourism and the conservation of Philippine ornamental species.

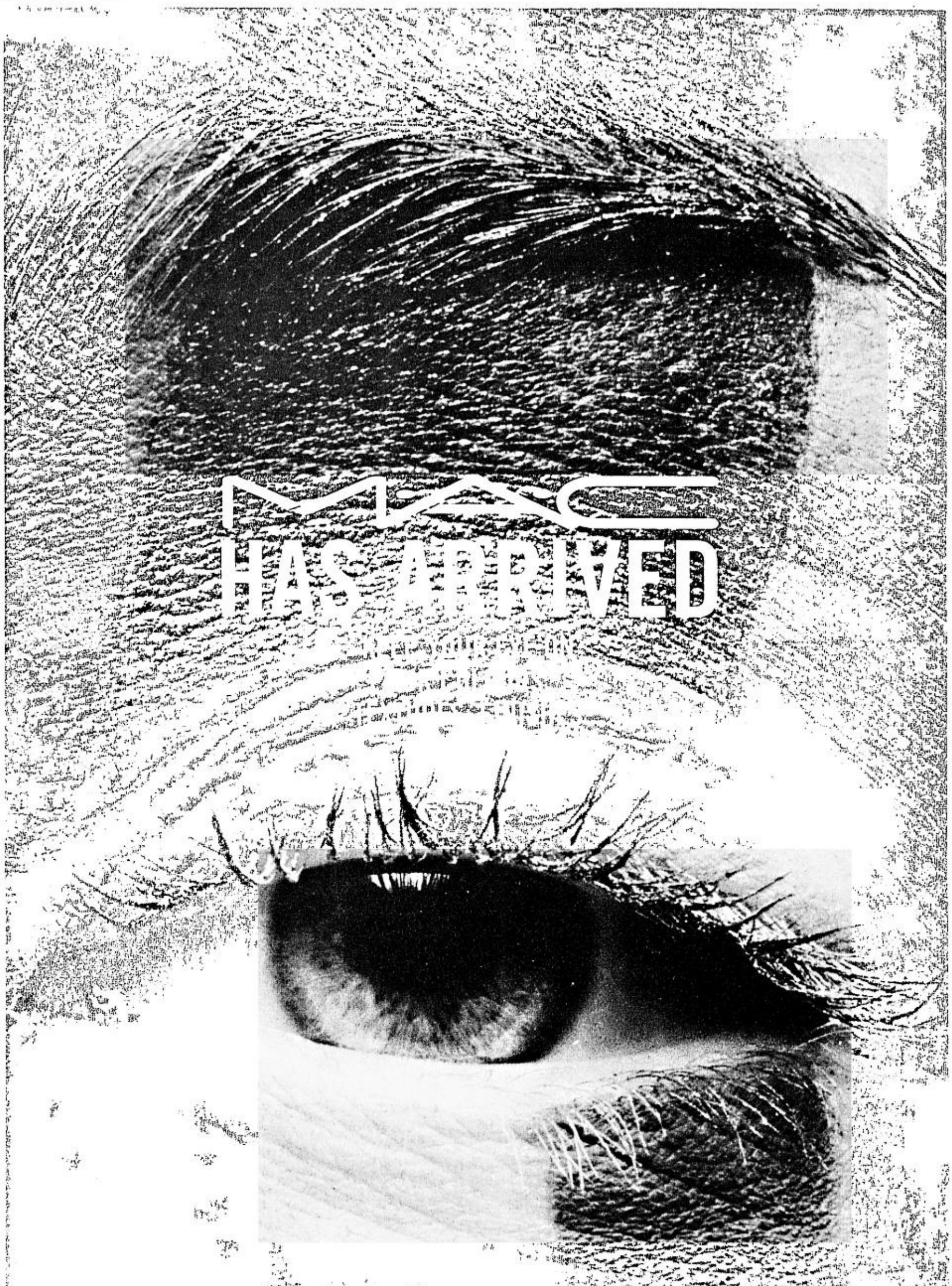
In addition to the floriculture exhibits, the congress will also feature an agri-industrial, flower and garden show with over 300 participants at the PTA grounds on Palma Gil cor. Camus St., Aug. 11-22.

Participants will go on an educational tour to Sul Orchids, Puentespina Orchids and Tropical Plants, Yuhico Orchid Farms, Chua's Orchid Garden, the Green Planet Flower Garden and Regie's Orchid Garden, among others.

The congress' executive committee is composed of Severino P. Mercado, overall chair; Charita Puentespina, co-chair; and Vicky Jimenez, FIDI president, overall coordinator.

Call Cherrie Laracas at (02) 2250203.





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One big hub for home design

ONE-OF-A-KIND modern fixtures

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Chito Vecina

A MODEST furniture factory warehouse constructed more than 35 years ago is now a three-story showroom featuring the Philippines' finest in woodwork, design, arts and more.

With about 20 furniture shops, four art galleries, three restaurants and a foot spa, this new building is set to become the alternative shopping center—home shopping, that is—in Makati City.

"No two showrooms are alike since each tenant has a different design concept. You don't see these items anywhere, not even in malls," says Toni C. Lo, president/owner of LRI Business Plaza, also known as the Design Center, on 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo Road), Makati City.

It was Lo's father, a furniture manufacturer, who first built the warehouse in the 1950s, starting off with wood before producing wood and rattan furnishings nearly a decade later. When the export industry flourished in the mid-'70s, Luzon Rattan Industry Inc. (LRI) shifted its market and began exclusively exporting its products.

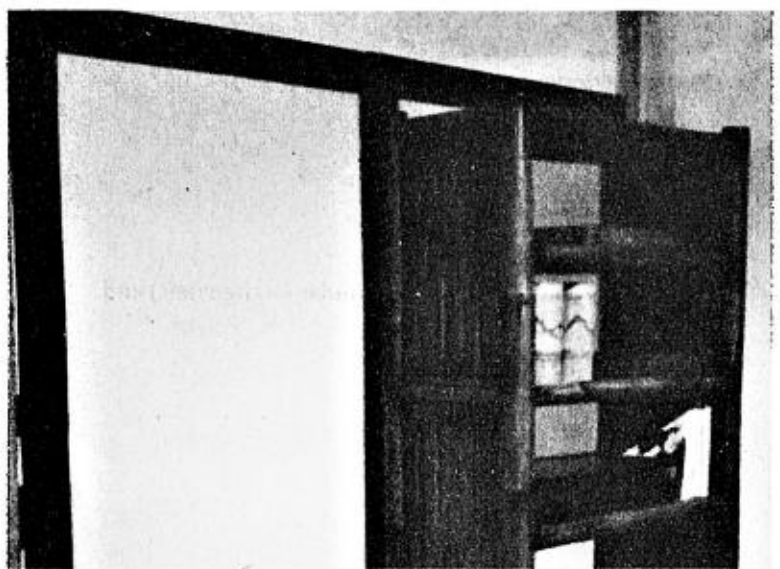
Back to showroom

In 2001, however, Lo decided it was time to once again channel some of his company's furniture to the local market—and so did his longtime associates in the export industry.

"This concept has been at the back of my mind for a long time, but it was never realized until my friends told me it was time to move on to showrooms," says Lo.

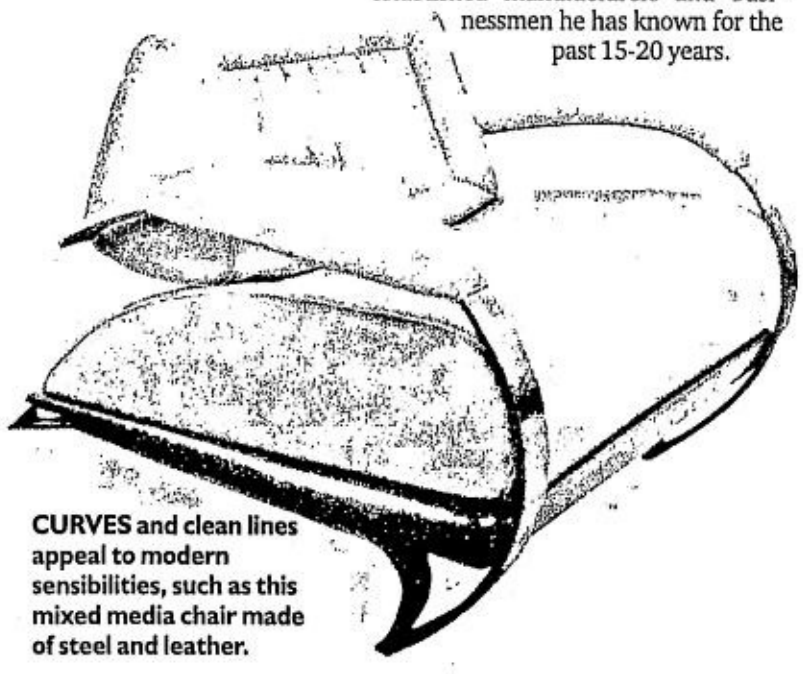
Besides, he reasons, there are way too many office spaces on Reposo street. By choosing to put up the Design Center instead, Lo says it is joining the Reposo group that promotes the place as a destination for arts and design in this part of the city.

So Lo had the building renovated and started renting out spaces to his friends, many of them established manufacturers and businessmen he has known for the past 15-20 years.



FURNITURE come in different sizes to suit the individual needs of clients.

IMAJE Designs Inc. are manufacturers and exporters of bamboo furniture and accessories—crushed, laminated or polished.



CURVES and clean lines appeal to modern sensibilities, such as this mixed media chair made of steel and leather.

ETHNIC artifacts, folk art and traditional craftsmanship with native resource
Artifacts

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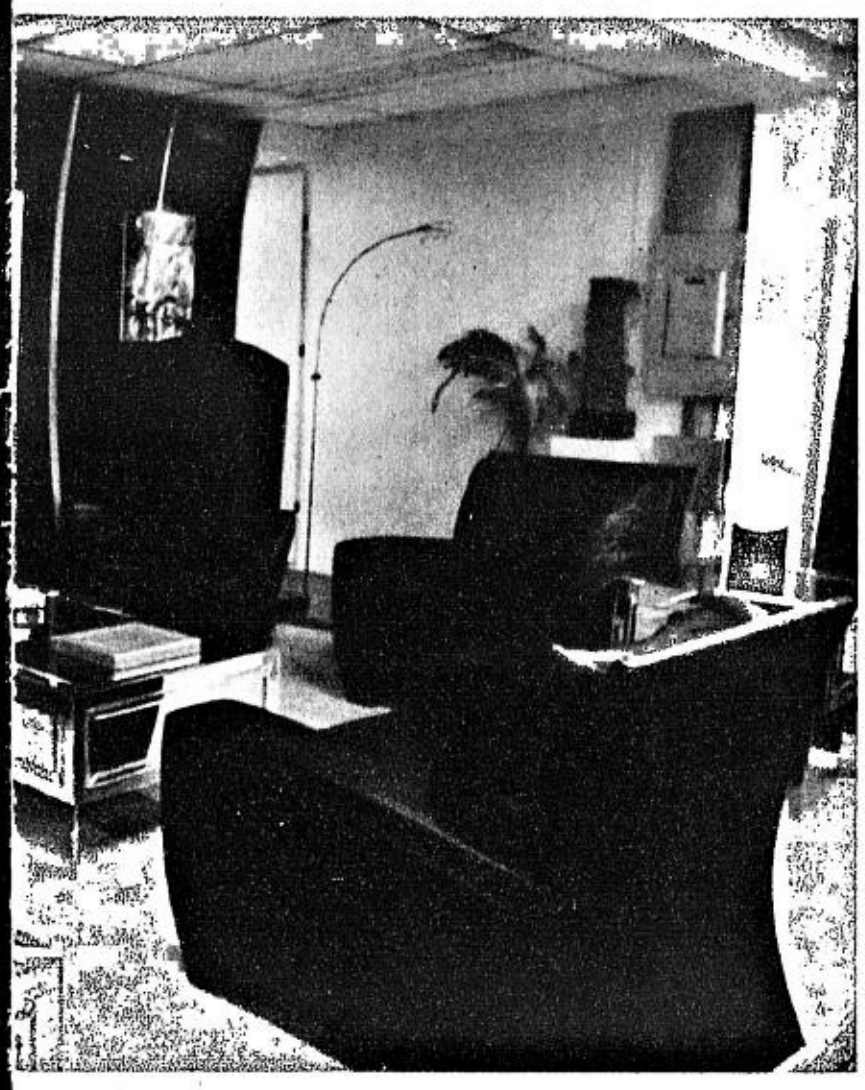


LEATHER living room set for that masculine touch, (left) and a showcase from Habitat Atalyer

Citem shows will be held twice a year at the Design Center, says Lo, plus one international furniture show to be handled by the Chamber of Furniture. Seventy percent on retail are locally made, and one-third of its tenants are major players in the furniture export industry. Hence, a number of items can be found only at the Design Center.

"We wanted to get more exporters, but a lot of them are still not convinced they should tap the local market," Lo says.

With more people patronizing products made in China and Indonesia, the Philippine furniture industry has been reshuffling in the past five years. Thus, instead of competing head-on with China, for instance, which now dominates the upper lower and lower middle markets, the Philippine Furniture Manufacturers has decided to go upscale, observes Lo.

More variety

The results are more variety on the combination of materials, (such as terra cotta and leather, for example), more work into design, and greater quality.

Lo notes that in the export scene, China and Indonesia mass-market their furniture to the likes of Walmart, while the Philippines showcases its products at boutiques. Since many local exporters now have 15-20 percent excess production capacity, these "unused capacity" are then diverted to the local market.

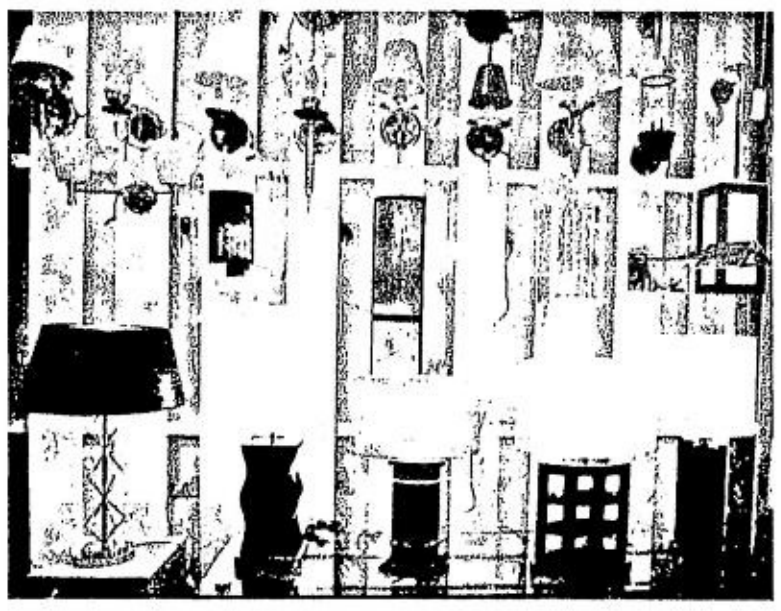
"We have a good middle to upper-income class here who can pay. These are not your run-of-the-mill furniture and accessories. We are known in the export industry, and the few younger companies are also talented and capable of doing the business," he says.

Aside from showrooms, art galleries and restaurants, the Design Center also houses a language school and learning center and a photo studio. It is a hub for world-class home and office furniture, fixtures and furnishings—from curtains to lamps to carpets to wallpapers, from antiques to handicrafts to kitchen showrooms, from a visual showcase of industrial and interior designers to the country's fine assemblage of artworks.

Costumers, says Lo, have a wider range of unique products to choose from, be it chic and modern or classic and traditional. Whether they need large pieces for their homes or businesses such as restaurants, resorts or hotels, or smaller items for their condo units, the Design Center has almost everything they need to spruce up their space.

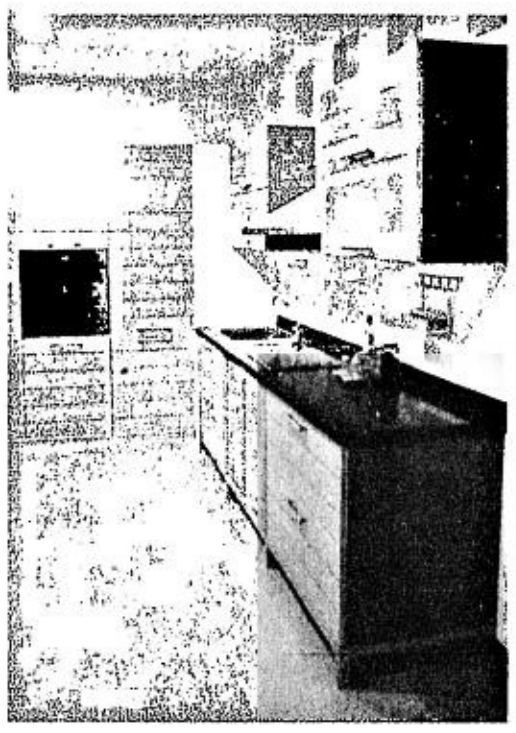
"We are accessible to Makati residents everywhere. We're not too much in the center of the business district so there's also not much traffic. Our clients are confident that they don't get cheated. They get their money's worth, that's a guarantee," says Lo.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

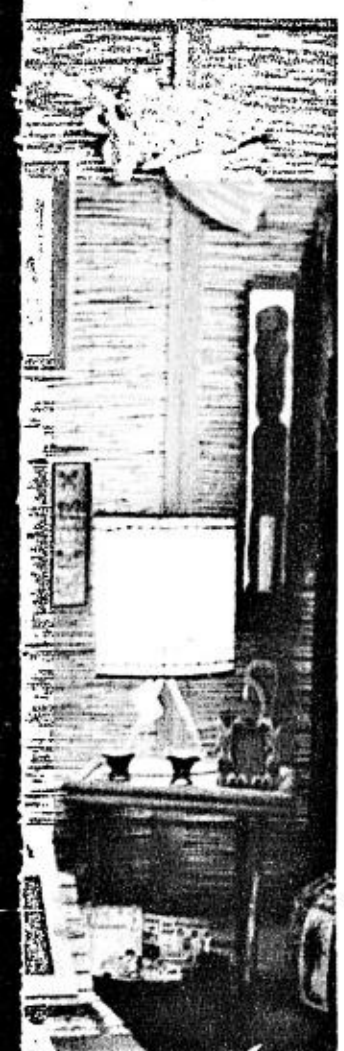


MIXED-MEDIA furniture and accessories, such as this leather and wrought-iron outdoor set, are available at Betis House of Decor Inc.

KEYSTONE lamps, lightings and fixtures from Celestial Lightings and Interiors Corp.



MODERN modular kitchen (left) and traditional kitchen (below) both from Gruppo Sancarlo Inc.

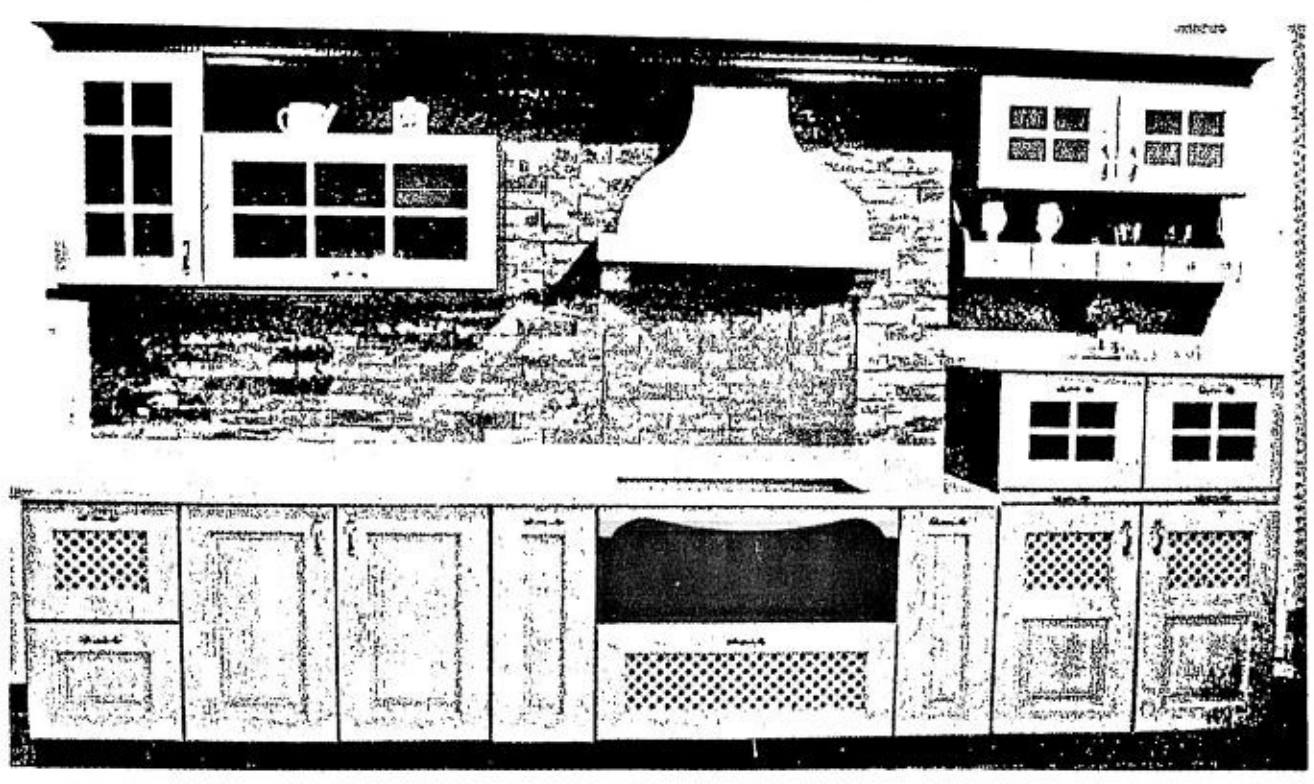


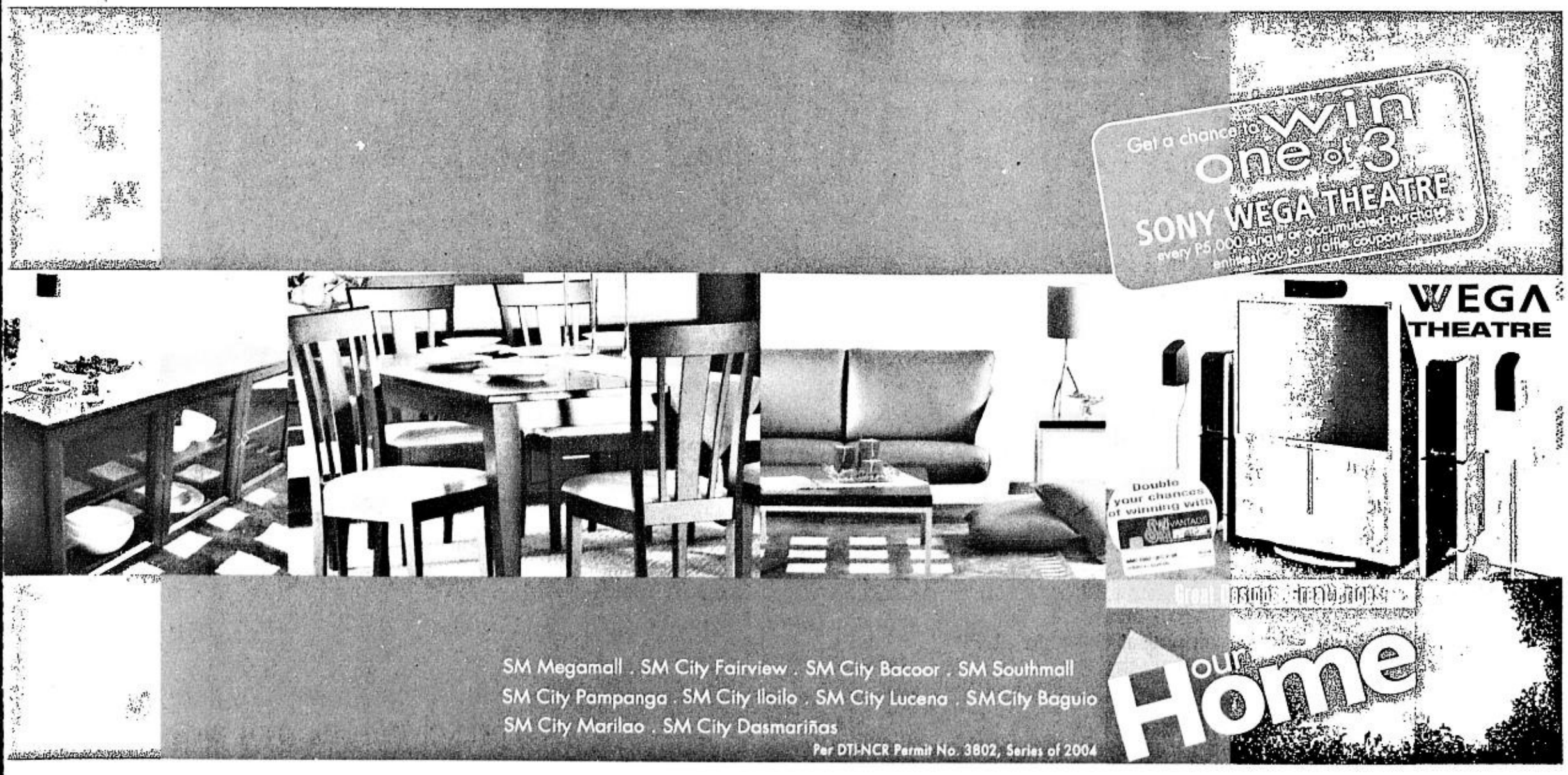
ASIAN furnishings, such as this Chinese cabinet, are available in classic and modern styles.

ANTIQUE Oriental has rare and authentic Orientalia, including artifacts, jewelry, religious icons, folk and ethnic art, old coins and decorative pottery and porcelain.

s at Silahis Arts and

LRI Business Plaza in Makati City is a one-stop shop for world-class furniture, fixtures and accessories





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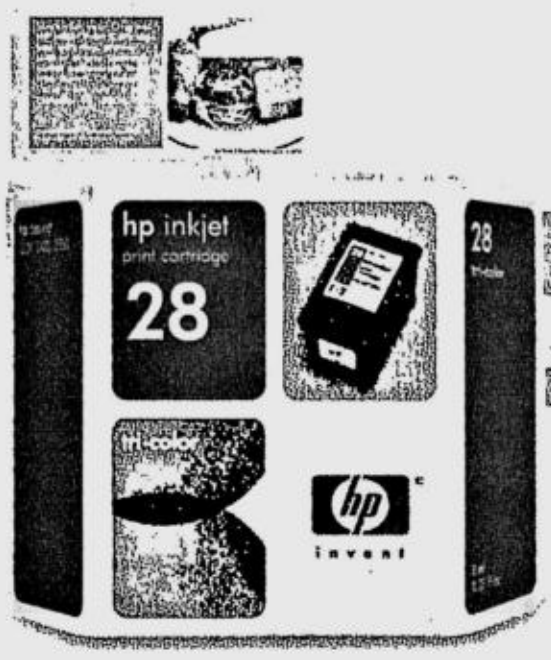

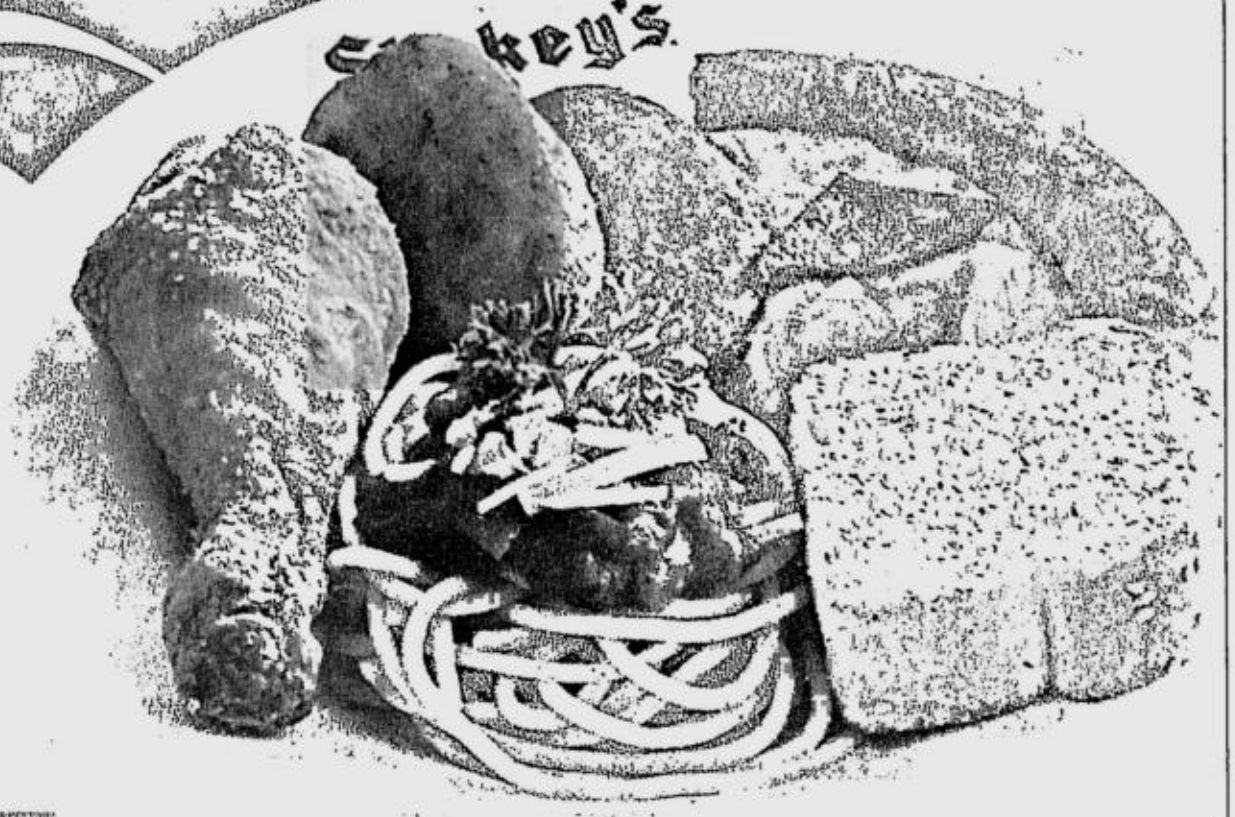

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Tanong ng Bayan/A16

■ Business / B1

Forex reserves dip to 5-month low of $15.99B in July

■ Across / A15

21 die in 2-day NPA-AFP clashes

■ Metro / A19

Underpass planned for Quezon Memorial Circle visitors

■ Saturday Special / F2 / D1

Teen queens Hilary Duff, Lindsay Lohan make school cool

Top directors still dote on Amy Austria

INQ INQ TV

One-woman policy: Uubra ba sa machong Pinoy?

WIN A 21" TV! TEXT 2910

NEW NUMBER

Fuel economy cartoon tips

STARTING today, a 30-day series of fuel economy cartoon tips (FECTs) will be published in the Motoring Section on Thursdays and in the Metro Section on other days. The tips are part of the information and education campaigns being pursued by the Department of Energy to help vehicle owners and the driving public reduce their costs of using and maintaining their vehicles.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Cool it, Pimentel texts Angara, Lacson

By Christine Avendaño

BREAK, break!

Sparring senators Edgardo Angara and Panfilo Lacson have found a referee in Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

COOL IT/ A17

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Saturday, August 7, 2004 ★★★ 68 pages / 9 sections / vol. 19 / no. 241 P18

website: www.inq7.net

GMA: No president can break RP-US ties

President to revive Bataan nuke plant

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Abigail L. Ho

FOR YEARS it has been mocked as a white elephant and the hundreds of millions of dollars Ferdinand Marcos borrowed to build it denounced as a debt of dishonor.

Now, 20 years after it rose over the town of Morong in Bataan, the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) may finally serve some purpose—but not in the manner the late dictator had envisioned it.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday unveiled her 5-point program to achieve self-sufficiency in energy anchored on the switch-on by next year of four idle power plants, including the mothballed, 20-year-old Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, which will be refitted to use natural gas from the Malampaya find in Palawan.

The Bataan nuclear plant was built in 1984 during the Marcos regime. On assuming power in 1986, Corazon Aquino mothballed the plant on concerns about its safety and allegations that the builder, Westinghouse Electric Corp, bribed officials of the Marcos regime to corner the contract for the facility.

Ms Arroyo made the announcement in the face of escalating world crude prices, which have threatened to bring more miseries to Filipino consumers.

Since its construction, the Bataan nuclear plant has not produced a single watt of electricity. To this day, the government pays $155,000 a day for the plant's interest expenses alone and its loans would not be fully paid until 2018.

Speaking before the Philippine Rural and Electric Cooperatives Association Inc., Ms Arroyo bemoaned the country's dependence on imported energy.

This has "made us vulnerable to the vagaries of global politics and economics, particularly events bearing on oil supply such as war, terrorism and currency fluctuations," she said.

"We should not be held hostage to these conditions. We need a reform package industry-wide of en-

PRESIDENT/ A17

ROMY HOPILLADA

AT THE PRESIDENT'S NIGHT at the Manila Overseas Press Club on Friday night, President Arroyo welcomes the presence of US envoy Ricciardone as "a gesture of friendship." She reiterates the country's continuing resolve to fight terrorism with Mindanao as one of the major fronts in the war.

Frigid relations starting to thaw

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Ruben G. Alabastro

FRIGID relations between the United States and the Philippines could be starting to thaw.

When she delivered a foreign policy speech at the Manila Overseas Press Club last night, President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomed US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone's presence at the affair as "a gesture of friendship."

In her speech, Ms Arroyo reiterated the country's continued resolve to fight terrorism and stressed "this is neither lip service nor posturing."

She added that the relations between the United States and the Philippines, even after the withdrawal of Filipino troops from Iraq last month, remained strong.

"No president can break this bond," she said.

In the same event, Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert announced that she would make a joint statement with Ricciardone on Monday on the state of

GMA: NO PRESIDENT/ A4

So be it, Palace says even as DFA in denial mode

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Jerome Aning

IT'S NO big deal.

That was the stoic reaction which Malacañang gave yesterday to a US State Department statement that the Philippines is no longer regarded as a member of the American-led Coalition of the Willing fighting terror in Iraq.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, however, appeared to be on a denial mode, insisting the country remained part of the anti-terror international coalition despite the country's decision to pull out its contingent from Iraq.

"The President has stuck to her oath, taken responsibility, and has no apologies. If this is the price to pay for being a Filipino and for leading the Filipino na-

SO BE IT/ A4

Twins will see each other face to face for 1st time

AP/MONTEFIORE MEDICAL CENTER

SIDE BY SIDE for the first time since their birth, Clarence and Carl Aguirre are recovering in the pediatric intensive care unit of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore in the Bronx, New York. At press time, the brothers were still under heavy sedation.

NEW YORK—With a 17-hour operation and its one nasty surprise behind them, the surgeons who separated two-year-old conjoined twins from the Philippines said that it will be days before they can see how the boys respond to their transformation.

As the doctors spoke at a news conference Thursday at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City's Bronx borough, Carl and Clarence Aguirre, who had been connected at the tops of their heads until Wednesday night, slept the day away upstairs, side by side instead of head to head, under heavy sedation.

Louis Singer, chief of pediatric intensive care at Montefiore's Children's Hospital, said the boys probably would be kept sedated through the weekend to help them heal. Doctors earlier had said the boys were expected to awaken Thursday.

When they do, it will be the first time the twins will see each other, apart and face to face.

An unexpected glitch occurred during the marathon surgery when doctors discovered the two brains to be fused at the back of the boys' heads. They expressed optimism that the consequence of separating the fused brains through manipulation instead of incision would be minimal.

TWINS/ A6

2 Baguio artists bag awards in Asean tilt

By Anne A. Jambora
Lifestyle

"*PARA sa Pilipinas 'to* (this is for the Philippines)!" Kawayan Thor Kalayaan de Guia exclaimed once he got over the shock.

He had just been named one of five winners of the Jurors' Choice Award in the 10th Asean Art Awards competition held recently in Bangkok, Thailand.

Another Filipino, Leonard L. Aguinaldo, ran away with the Grand Prize and the title, "Best Emerging Asean Artist of 2004," besting more than 30 entries from six countries.

The two winners are both from Baguio City.

It was the third time in less than a decade that Philippine contemporary art dominated the regional competition, sponsored

2 BAGUIO/ A6

Most Pinoys don't believe GMA won, says survey

By D.J. Yap, *PDI Research*, and Juliet Labog-Javellana

MAJORITY of Filipinos do not believe President Macapagal-Arroyo won the May 10 election, according to a survey of the Ibon Foundation Inc.

More than half, or 53.18 percent of Filipinos, believe that the congressional canvassing of the election was not credible, Ibon said, quoting the results of a nationwide survey conducted between June 30 and July 9.

Only 26.95 percent of the 1,618 respondents trust the election results, the survey showed.

The Ibon Foundation, which describes itself in its website as an independent research think tank, said it conducted the survey to find out about people's perception of the economy, their income and livelihood, government performance and other "pressing issues."

Malacañang immediately dismissed the Ibon survey.

"This issue has been settled by Congress acting as a national canvassing board," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao, a former leftist leader who once worked with Ibon, was particularly harsh.

"I'm baffled why anyone takes Ibon seriously. They've never disclosed methodology. It's not sur-

MOST PINOYS/ A17

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western Luzon and Visayas will have occasional rains. The rest of Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thundertorms. Mindanao will be mostly cloudy with rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/08/07/04

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text Feedback: Inquirer news name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Occasional Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Occasional Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Occasional Rains
Laoag	Occasional Rains	Tacloban	Occasional Rains
Clark Zone	Occasional Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Occasional Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Occasional Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

PNP willing to arm journalists

Noli dared to help solve murder of broadcaster

By Christian V. Esguerra
and Jerome Aning

GUNS are mightier than pens?

Alarmed by the rising number of journalists being killed, the Philippine National Police yesterday said it was willing to arm reporters under threat.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, police spokesperson, said it was PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. himself who raised the idea of arming journalists.

Golitao added that journalists needed only to apply for a permit to carry firearms outside of residences (PTCFOR).

"Carrying a gun is also important," he told reporters.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines yesterday asked for independent probes of the recent killings of two journalists.

The NUJP said the murders had exposed the Arroyo administration's claim of upholding press freedom as a "sham." It added that the Philippine media's helplessness in the face of violence was ironic, noting that a former broadcast journalist Noli de Castro had now become the country's vice president.

The group said the deaths of journalists Arnel Manalo and Roger Mariano "should challenge De Castro, who rode on the crest of his popularity as a broadcast journalist, into working for the swift resolution of the murders of his colleagues and ensuring that killers are brought to justice."

"More than any other individual in power, De Castro is in the best position to do something about these things," the NUJP added.

De Castro had branded the killings as treacherous and dastardly, but seemed content for now on letting the police handle the matter.

The Vice President called on Ebdane to be directly involved in the resolution of the killing of journalists "as a lasting gift to mediamen before he finally retires and leave the PNP."

De Castro expressed horror at the murder of Manalo, who had just sent his children to school when ambushed in Bauan, Batangas, on Wednesday. Manalo was the Batangas correspondent of the tabloid Bulgar and radio station dzRH.

"Respect for our colleagues in media and consideration to those they have left behind seem to have been eroded," De Castro said in a statement.

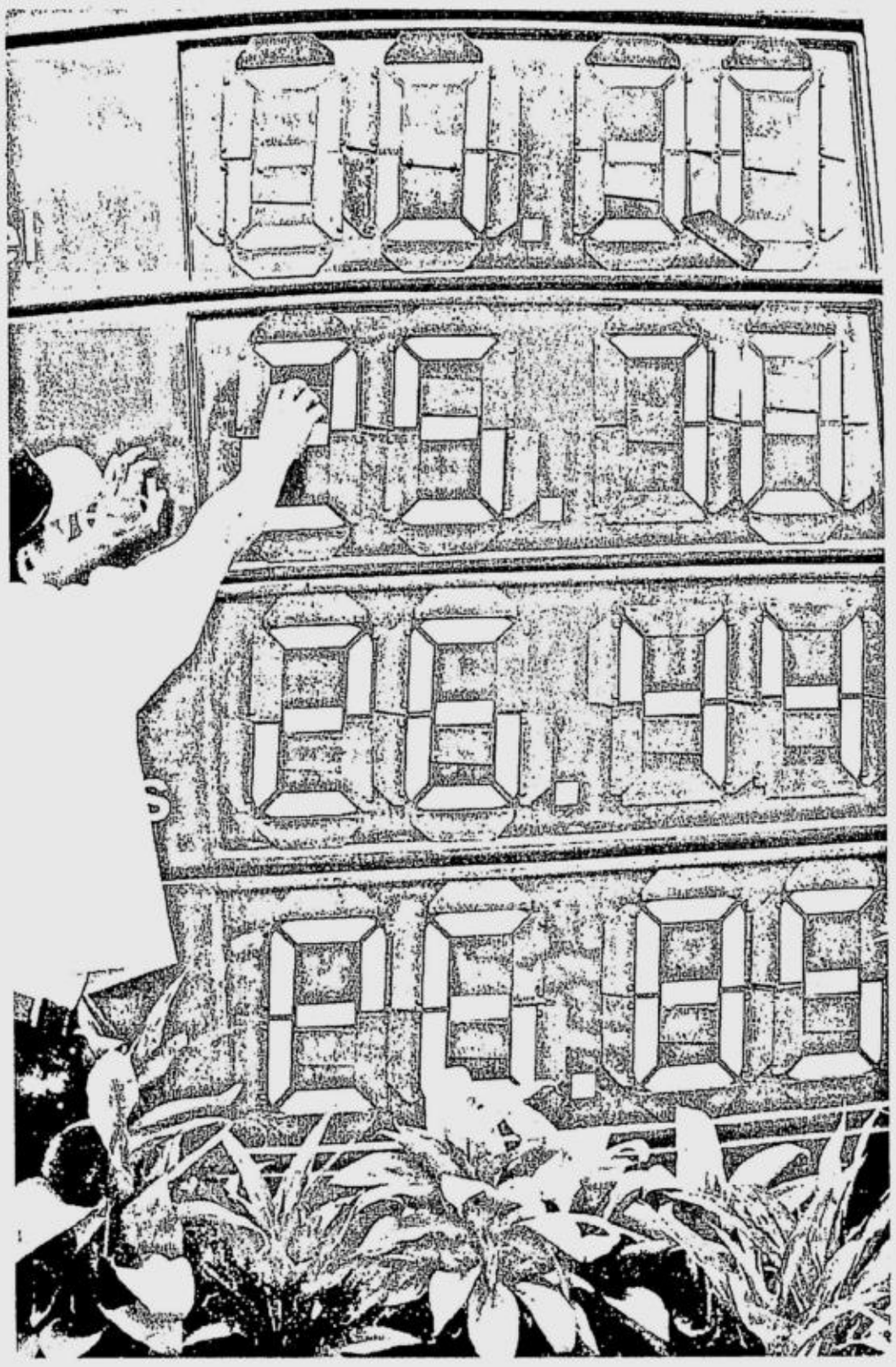
Manalo's death followed that of Roger Mariano, anchor of radio station dzJC in Laoag City, last week.

The head of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization yesterday condemned Mariano's killing, calling it a crime against society.

"I condemn the murder of Mr. Mariano, which appears to be a cold-blooded attempt to silence a critical voice," said Unesco Director General Koichiro Matsuura.

"The NUJP called on De Castro, Congress and local and international advocates of press freedom to launch and participate in an independent investigation.

"While focusing on the killings of journalists, the investigation should also look into the working conditions in Philippine media that threaten press freedom. The NUJP believes that there can be no genuine press freedom if journalist continue to work under conditions of fear, poverty and corruption," it added.



UP, UP AND AWAY

The numbers keep going up and away after the major gasoline dealers once more increase their pump prices, the seventh so far this year. ERIK ARAZAS

Senator raises alarm over plight of poor RP kids

By Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. Panfilo Lacson yesterday expressed alarm over the sorry state of poor children in the country amid latest report showing that about 60,000 kids have been forced into prostitution.

"There are about five million child laborers and more than 1.5 million streetchildren in the country. And there are 60,000 prostituted children and their numbers increase by 3,266 annually, making the Philippines the fourth country with the most number of prostituted children," said Lacson.

Lacson blamed the Macapagal administration's laxity in managing population growth for the plight of the children.

"No thanks to an unchecked population growth, the state of children from poor families can now be considered bone-chilling," said Lacson.

He proposed a bill that will create a multi-agency council to formulate, promote and implement policies on family planning, and start reproductive health education at grade 5.

Lacson supports a proposal for government to adopt a two-child policy.

Canadian faces raps for child sex in Southeast Asia

VANCOUVER, Canada—Prosecutors in Canada are amassing a precedent-setting case in the fight against Southeast Asian sex tourism —against the first Canadian charged at home with alleged sex crimes abroad.

Hotel worker Donald Bakker is expected to appear in court in Vancouver in September, charged with 28 counts of sexual assault involving women and prepubescent Southeast Asian girls and making child pornography.

The countries in which his alleged crimes took place cannot be named because of a court-ordered publication ban.

"This case is somewhat unique because the alleged sexual offenses against children were committed outside of Canada," said prosecution spokesman Geoff Gaul.

"It is the first time this section (of the Criminal Code) has been used, so there may not be any precedent when we make our arguments," he said.

Defense lawyers are expected to argue that the Canadian government has no jurisdiction over alleged offenses committed abroad.

The seven-year-old law was meant to help stem child abuse internationally.

Some 120 governments agreed at the first World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Stockholm in 1996 that each should enact their own legislation against child sex tourism.

Canada did so the following year. But, while nearly 100 people from various countries were convicted of child sex tourism elsewhere, nobody was ever prosecuted in Canada until now.

Canada is among a number of Western countries committed to combating the scourge of sex-tourism.

It is particularly rife in Southeast Asia, in countries like Thailand, the Philippines and Cambodia. *AFP*

Public relations man accuses 'Jamby' of harassment

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Cathy Canares

SEN. Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal was yesterday accused of harassment by a former staffer who helped her plan her much-publicized wedding in December 2002.

Public relations practitioner Peter Sing said at a press conference yesterday that armed men had been casing his home in Mandaluyong City last week days before a warrant of arrest was issued against him for an estafa case filed by Madrigal.

"I will do everything and anything to protect my family," said Sing who claimed that the harassment has "terrified my family."

Sing said armed men had been casing his house since July 29, days before a warrant for his arrest was issued Aug. 2.

Sing said he planned to file a complaint at the Senate Ethics Committee against Madrigal, a staunch loyalist of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Melchor Amado Jr., spokesperson for Madrigal, denied the senator was involved in the surveillance and harassment of Sing.

"Madrigal simply filed an estafa (fraud) case through her legal counsel against Peter Sing, her former employee, for failing to account for funds intended for the senator's projects and remit unspent amounts," said Amado in a phone interview.

Amado said Quezon City Judge Maria Luisa Quijano Padilla issued a warrant last week for the arrest of Sing and another former Madrigal employee, Rosario Tiano.

Amado said on the contrary, the senator was the "object of harassment by Sing when he resorted to a villification campaign targeting the senator through media and text messages to get even."

Sing had denied being behind any black propaganda campaign against Madrigal, saying he had been quiet about Madrigal and in between jobs since he resigned from the senator's staff.

Sing and Tiano resigned in 2003 after Madrigal refused to recognize the documents that they submitted to liquidate expenses that the senator claimed were misspent.

Two of the estafa cases had already been dismissed by the Mandaluyong City Prosecutors Office "for lack of probable cause."

A third was dismissed but was elevated to the Quezon City Regional Trial Court after a city prosecutor reversed on May 27 the dismissal order earlier issued by another prosecutor.

A warrant of arrest was issued Aug. 2. Sing posted bail. Madrigal had contracted the legal services of the Fortun brothers, who defended Estrada against plunder charges during his impeachment trial, to pursue the estafa case against Sing.

Madrigal, who lost in the 2001 senatorial election, hired Sing in April 2002 in preparation for the second bid she won in May with the help of a massive ad campaign.

Sing said he introduced Madrigal to local officials in Cebu, Iloilo and Palawan to widen her political network.

But he was also Madrigal's man Friday then.

He also helped Madrigal put up Harmony Therapy Center, a reflexology clinic at the Greenhills Shopping Center.

Sing was also involved in organizing Madrigal's fairy tale wedding to Eric Valade, who claims to belong to French nobility, on Dec. 7, 2002 in Calatagan, Batangas.

NPA sets terms for release of 2 soldiers

By Norman Bordadora,
TJ Burgonio
and Christian V. Esguerra

THE RELEASE of two Army soldiers being detained as prisoners of war by the communist New People's Army would depend on the government's fulfilling its supposed commitment to suspend offensive military and police operations in the provinces of Camarines Sur and Albay, a rebel spokesperson said yesterday.

The NPA has been holding Lt. Ronaldo Fedelino and Pfc. Ronnel Lemeño of the 42nd Infantry Battalion for more than five months now. The two were captured after a seven-hour long clash with the rebels on March 1 in Tinambac, Camarines Sur.

Gregorio Rosal, the Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson, said the NPA in Bicol was closely monitoring Armed Forces' and the Philippines National police's compliance with the the suspension of military and police operations (Somo).

The two soldiers are being held by the NPA's Romulo Jallores Command in the Bicol region.

Rosal said that the cessation of offensive military and police operations in the areas to be covered by the release is a required standard operating procedure to ensure the safe and orderly release of POWs under conditions of war and belligerency as well as the rebels' secure retreat from the area of release.

In a statement, Rosal said the Somo agreement was supposed to start at the end of July and last for about a month.

But he said the AFP and PNP had been refusing to suspend offensive military and police operations despite agreements reached in negotiations between government and the NDF since the end of March.

Military officials have argued that suspending operations would only allow the rebels "to regroup" in the region.

"The POWs should have been released as early as the first week of April if not for the intransigence and non-compliance of the AFP with the agreements," Rosal said.

"This will give the custodial unit of the NPA enough time and leeway to make adequate arrangements for the safe and orderly release of the POWs," he said.

If the compliance with the Somo agreement "proves to be in good faith and satisfactory, there should be no problem with the release of the two POWs soonest," Rosal said.

He said it "would serve as a wonderful birthday gift" to Fedelino's daughter, Alea Nicole, who celebrates her birthday on Aug. 16.

Luis Jalandoni, the chair of the National Democratic Front and the rebels' chief negotiator in peace talks with the government, has already assured the release of Fedelino and Nemeno as soon as the military and police suspend operations in Bicol.

Jalandoni has stressed that the Somo, to clear the way for the release of the POWs, was not a precondition for the resumption of formal peace talks.

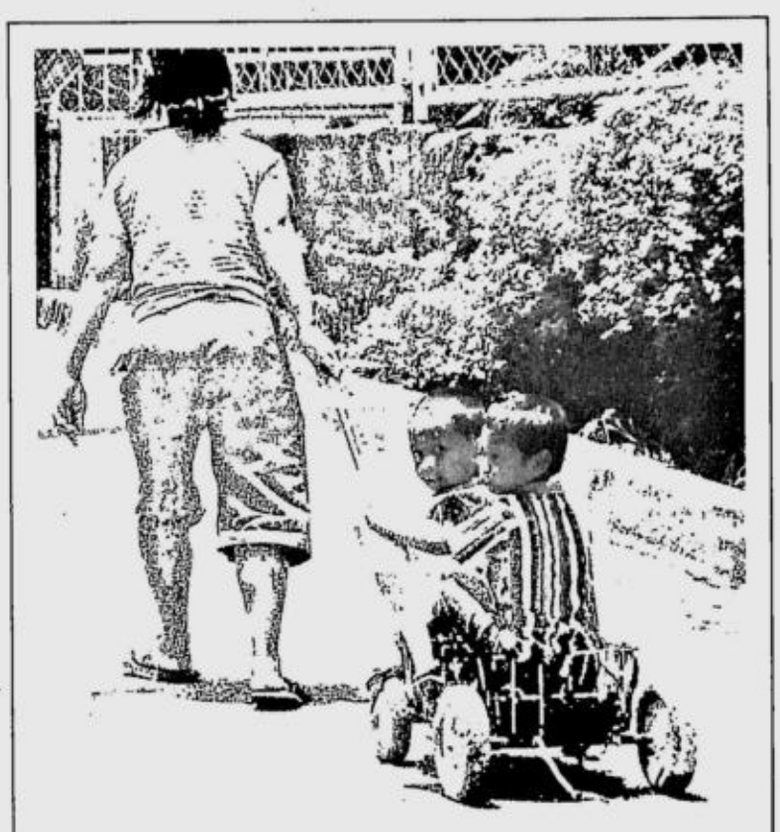
Silvestre Bello III, , the chief government negotiator in the peace talks, said the government was negotiating with the NDF for a prisoner swap before formal peace negotiations in Oslo from Aug. 24 to 30.

Bello said he was hoping the NPA would free Fedelino and Nemeno without any condition.

He said he was also hoping the government could free 15 political prisoners previously scheduled for release before negotiators leave for the Norwegian capital.

"We're working on the two Army officers' release and we're hoping they would be freed soon with no condition whatsoever," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Bello said there were no instructions yet from Malacañang on whether it would accede to the condition. "We understand the NDF's position and we're also considering it," he said.



SCHOOL MOM

Necessity is the mother of invention. This mother converts an old toy car to transport her children from school to spare them the long uphill climb to their home in lower Brookside, Baguio City. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

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So be it, Palace says while DFA is in denial

From page A1

tion, so be it," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

"There are other perhaps even more meaningful ways to sustain and strengthen our strategic relationship with the United States," Bunye said. "We shall always work to keep the relationship firm in propelling the common commitment to fight terrorism domestically, regionally and worldwide."

Bunye issued the statement after US State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher asked pointblank in Washington if the Philippines was a member of the Coalition, said: "Not at this point, no."

Unique situation

Sounding even tougher, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales called for a "reevaluation" of the Philippine foreign policy on the Middle East, saying it should not be based on any alliances but on the protection of its 1.5 million workers in the troubled region.

"Let's have a more accurate policy on the Middle East and in Asia-Pacific," Gonzales said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER.

Gonzales, a member of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security, said the primary concern of the Philippines should be the welfare of the Filipino workers in the Middle East.

He said this "unique situation" set the Philippines apart from other members of the Coalition, comprising nations which still have troops in Iraq.

"Our being a member of the coalition is in accordance with our national interest. If the members of the Coalition of the Willing are not going to understand our situation, so be it," he said.

Asked if this would not antagonize the US further, Gonzales said: "We are not trying to antagonize them. They are the ones trying to antagonize us."

Gonzales questioned the wisdom of the Philippines staying on with the coalition.

"What have we gotten as a member of the coalition anyway?" Gonzales asked. "Whether we're part of the coalition or not, the quality of our workers will always be appreciated in Iraq. We have close to 4,000 workers there. Member or not, we'll be there."

Gonzales reiterated his view that the Philippines ought to rethink its policy on Iraq and the Middle East in general because of what he said was the "changing" character of the conflict in Iraq.

"We entered that war helping the people of Iraq to remove a dictator. The situation is very different now. There is no dictator anymore," Gonzales said.

In a statement, the DFA said the Philippines remained a part of the United Nations-mandated international coalition in Iraq, despite the Boucher remarks.

Boucher made his remark after the State Department released a "Multinational Force Statement on Terrorism" made by coalition members, who said that their objective of helping keep the peace in Iraq would not be shaken by terrorist attacks.

The multinational statement said: "We understand that conceding to terrorists will only endanger all members of the multinational force, as well as other countries, who are contributing to Iraqi reconstruction and humanitarian assistance."

The DFA said Boucher's statement "referred only to states that continue to maintain troops in Iraq."

It said it sought clarification from the US Embassy and was told that Boucher's answer was not intended to mean that countries that supported the principles and objectives of the coalition, and who contributed to the rebuilding of Iraq but who had no troops there were no longer considered part of the coalition.

Senators merely shrugged off the US State Department statement.

"Hopefully that removes us from the coalition of targeted nations by these Iraqi insurgents," quipped Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Policy independent of US

In a phone interview, Drilon said that the removal of the Philippines from the coalition would "send signals to Iraqi insurgents that we are pursuing a policy independent of the United States in so far as the Iraqi conflict is concerned."

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. said the US move was "no big deal" as he had expected this, following Manila's decision to pull out its humanitarian contingent in Iraq last month to save the life of Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz.

In a statement, Villar said the government should take it as a challenge to bring its relations with the US to a "mature level."

"I doubt if the US government will cut its ties with the Philippines," Villar said.

He said there was a need for Manila to craft a foreign policy that was "consistent with the interest of the people." He said the case of De la Cruz "should be the turning point in our foreign policy."

Equally unruffled Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, incoming national defense committee chair, questioned what it meant in the first place to be a member of the coalition.

"The government did not lose anything from such dropping from the coalition membership," Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said in a statement. "It might earn the indignation of some, but it nevertheless gained the respect of the many."

Sen. Alfredo Lim said there was no cause for worry as he was optimistic that "RP-US relations will be back to normal in time."

"If that is their decision, so be it," said Lim, who said it was like "a problem concerning two lovers."

"If you are no longer loved, then look for another who will love you back," Lim said.

Sen. Serge Osmeña said that the "goodies" that came with being a member of the coalition would be gone.

"In local and international politics, there is such a thing as a carrot and the stick. You join me I'll give you a carrot . . .This is how the big boys play," Osmeña told reporters.

He also quoted a source as telling him that US President George W. Bush was "livid" with US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone for assuring him that Ms Arroyo was a reliable ally.

Osmeña said that, according to his source, Bush recalled Ricciardone to Washington after Manila withdrew its contingent in Iraq.

With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

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CUEVAS, Mary Ann E.	BS Economics	University of the Philippines – Diliman
DOMINGO, Konde Luciano P.	Computer Engineering	Ateneo de Manila University
EMPLEO, Enrico Carlo C.	BS Mechanical Engineering	University of the Philippines – Diliman
IQUIN, Jerick C.	BS Elec. & Comm. Engineering	University of Santo Tomas
LACSON, Carlos Miguel M.	BS Elec. & Comm. Engineering	Ateneo de Manila University
PUNSALAN, Mary Ann A.	BS Management Economics	Ateneo de Manila University
REYES, Jenina Marie D.	BS Statistics	De La Salle University
ROGEL, Edward Andrew P.	BS Management Engineering	Ateneo de Manila University
ROLLAN, Rhett Albert A.	BS Mathematics	University of the Philippines – Diliman
YAP, David B.	BS Statistics	University of the Philippines – Diliman

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CARANDANG, Phrances Xharmagne C.	BS Information Technology	St. Louis University
CARANGUIAN, Luther Paul	DR. BS Elec. & Comm. Engineering	University of the Philippines – Diliman
GARRIDO, Jerwin Demy E.	AB Mass Communications	University of the Philippines – Diliman
VELASQUEZ, Mon Ruiz S.	BS Electrical Engineering	University of the Philippines – Diliman

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CAGUIMBAL, Emmanuel V.	BS Mechanical Engineering	University of the Philippines – Diliman
LEAL, Dan Rowen R.	BS Civil Engineering	University of the Philippines – Diliman
UMALI, Paolo Dominict E.	BS Applied Mathematics	University of the Philippines – Los Baños

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JAIM, Mark Erben A.	BS Electrical Engineering	University of the Philippines – Los Baños
JOVEN, Rafael Francisco LL.	BS Elec. & Comm. Engineering	Ateneo de Naga

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BAYAG, Ed Angelo C.	BS Applied Mathematics	University of the Philippines – Visayas
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PALGAN, Mae Emmeline	AB Mass Communications	University of the Philippines – Dilman
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TUTOR, Kristoffer T.	BS Elec. & Comm. Engineering	University of San Carlos

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ROMUALDO, Kate Russel S.	BS Elec. & Comm. Engineering	Mindanao Polytechnic State College

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JARON, Joe Darryl L.	BS Accountancy	Ateneo de Zamboanga

(PDI – August 1, 2, 7-9, 14-16, 21-23 & 28-30, 2004)

GMA: No . . .

From page A1

US-Philippine relations.

In an interview, Ricciardone acknowledged the "stable" relations between the United States and the Philippines but refused to comment when asked if the joint statement would mean positive news for the Philippines.

He also refused to answer when asked whether or not the Philippines was still part of the US-led Coalition of the Willing. *(See story on Page A1.)*

After the speech, Ricciardone had dinner at the same table with Ms Arroyo.

Relations between the two countries have been strained by the decision of the Arroyo administration to pull out Filipino troops from Iraq to save truck driver Angelo de la Cruz whom Iraqi insurgents had threatened to behead.

Mindanao front

Ms Arroyo said in her speech there were meaningful ways of strengthening ties with the United States other than maintaining the presence of Filipino troops in Iraq.

"We shall always fight terrorism" domestically, regionally and globally, she said.

She stressed that her administration's campaign to wipe out terrorist groups operating in Mindanao "overshadows whatever we can contribute" to the fight against terror in Iraq.

"It is one of the most important fronts in the war on terror," Ms Arroyo said, referring to efforts by the military and police to eliminate suspected terrorist cells in the country's South.

Ms Arroyo also cited the role played by American troops in the Mindanao campaign by training Filipino troops in counterterrorism.

8 realities

Ms Arroyo spelled out anew what she called the "eight realities" of her foreign policy.

These were:

- The United States, China and Japan have a determining influence in the security and economic future of Asia.
- Philippine foreign policy has to be crafted within the context of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean).
- The international Islamic community is becoming more and more important to the Philippines.
- The coming years will see a redefinition of multilateral and inter-regional organizations, like the World Trade Organization, in promoting common interests.
- There is need to defend Philippine sovereignty by protecting its maritime interests.
- The current economic growth will continue to require a lot of foreign direct investment.
- A country as beautiful as the Philippines can benefit from tourism.
- Overseas Filipino workers will continue to play a critical role in the country's social and economic stability.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, August 7, 2004
18th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Hb 1:12-2:4
Gospel: Mt 17:14-20

A man approached Jesus, knelt before him and said, "Sir, have pity on my son who is an epileptic and is in a wretched state. He has often fallen into the fire and at other times into the water. I brought him to your disciples but they could not heal him."

Jesus replied, "You, faithless and evil people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave the boy, and the boy was immediately healed.

The disciples then gathered around Jesus and asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive out the spirit?" Jesus said to them, "Because you have little faith. I say to you: if only you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could tell that mountain to move from here to there, and the mountain would obey. Nothing would be impossible to you."

Commentary

The disciples had been sent out earlier with "authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness" (Mt 10:1). But here was a case that defeated them. They were a long way now from the top of the mountain and the experience of the Transfiguration. Now they were in the valley, or what Bunyan called "the Slough of Despond." Mountains are for the big vision. But the three principal disciples on that occasion had been asleep, and awoke only for the peak experience. Now in the valley they wonder why they can't do anything. Their faith, Jesus told them, was less than the size of a mustard seed. This was the small vision!

But if their faith were the size of a mustard seed, he told them, they could move mountains. Even if they were not up to the big vision, they could still do great work.

How he stretched them! How humble they must have felt, much of the time, and how uneasy with themselves! There's not one of us who hasn't slept through mysteries; we are those sleepy disciples. When we want to feel comfortable with our faith' he wakes us up. How? Through disappointments, through unflattering insights into ourselves, through suffering...

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LEGAL ETHICS—Lawyer is an officer of the court—Under Canon 10 of the Code of Professional Responsibility, a lawyer owes candor, fairness, and good faith to the court. He shall "not do any falsehood, nor consent to the doing of any in court; nor shall he mislead or allow the court to be misled by any artifice." This Rule was clearly and openly violated by the respondent when he permitted Marcelina to falsely testify that she had no siblings aside from Felicisima and when he offered such testimony in the petition for reconstitution of the title. The respondent must have forgotten that as an attorney he is an officer of the court called upon to assist in the administration of justice. Like the court itself, he is an instrument to advance its cause. For this reason, any act on his part that obstructs and impedes the administration of justice constitutes misconduct and justifies disciplinary action against him. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Per Curiam, Dumali vs Torres, A.C. No. 5161. April 14, 2004] BY R. B. Vera

Correction

THE STORY "More officials than athletes going to Athens for Olympics," which was published in the INQUIRER yesterday, incorrectly gave the impression that the government, through Malacañang, was financing the trip of the Philippine delegation to the Olympic Games in Athens. The Philippine Olympic Committee, a private entity, is the one paying for the trip. The size of the delegation is dictated by the qualifying standards and requirements of the International Olympic Committee.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Palace tells judges: Respect independent gov't watchdogs

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG yesterday said judges must respect the ruling of independent watchdogs such as the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) as much as the executive branch has respected the rulings of the judiciary.

"We should all consider the separation of powers of the three branches of government. But we must also respect the opinion of each branch and Malacañang has always respected the decision of the courts," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye in an interview with dzRB radio.

Malacañang had previously urged judges to lay off cases involving economic and highly technical matters beyond their field of expertise.

"We make an appeal to our courts to give the ERC, also an independent body, the benefit of the doubt and allow it to exercise its competence and proficiency in resolving highly complicated and technical power issues," said Bunye who read a statement prepared by Energy Secretary Vince Perez.

Malacañang made the statement after the Court of Appeals ruled last week that the ERC "gravely erred" when it approved Manila Electric Co.'s 17-centavo per kilowatt hour rate hike without undertaking the mandatory audit of its financial books.

The court ordered the ERC to review Meralco's petition after the Commission on Audit has gone through the country's largest private power utility firm's records.

Malacañang's remarks did not sit well with the country's leading court officials including Chief Justice Hilario Davide.

"Its not a question of expertise in economic policies because indeed we don't have expertise. But when the Constitution is tested, we do have the authority," Davide retorted.

First Filipino bishop in US arriving Sunday

THE FIRST Filipino to be named bishop in the United States is scheduled to arrive tomorrow for a three-week visit to renew ties with his homeland.

Most Rev. Oscar Azarcon Solis is scheduled to visit his hometown in Nueva Ecija and his former schools.

Solis was appointed by Pope John Paul II to be an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles last year. He was ordained bishop by Cardinal Roger Mahoney on Feb. 10, 2004 and assigned as coordinator of the Archdiocesan Ethnic Ministries. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has the most number of Filipino Catholics in the United States.

Solis will celebrate his first Mass in Manila as bishop on Aug. 11 at the Manila Cathedral in the presence of Manila Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales.

A native of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, he is the son of Anselmo de la Fuente Solis and Antonia Ortega Azarcon. He has three sisters and three brothers, one of whom is a priest assigned in Hong Kong.

He graduated cum laude from the University of Santo Tomas Central Seminary with a degree in Sacred Theology and pursued post graduate studies in Oriental Religions and Cultures.

He was ordained priest on April 28, 1979.

In 1984 he moved to the United States, first in New Jersey and then in Louisiana.

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PER DOH-BFAD PERMIT NO. 0830 S. 2004

Twins will see each other face to face for 1st time

From page A1

The hospital continued to describe the boys' condition as "strong and stable," and its president, Dr. Spencer Foreman, declared the separation a success.

Doctors performed four major surgeries since October to gradually separate the boys, instead of the marathon sessions used in previous separations of conjoined twins.

Remarkable process

"A huge step forward in this remarkable process has been accomplished," Foreman said. "We hope that Carl and Clarence will now begin to thrive as two separate and unique individuals."

Dr. James Goodrich, the neurosurgeon who led the operating team, said surgeons discovered that a 13-square-centimeter (2-square-inch) area of the boys' brains at the back of the heads was fused just as they thought they were nearing separation.

Doctors had expected the brains to be abutting, but they were "anatomically linked," Goodrich said at a hospital news conference.

'Brains talking together'

"Obviously the brains were talking to each other," he said, meaning working jointly in some way.

By referring to three-dimensional images created in advance and following the contours they could see, the doctors manipulated the brains apart without resorting to an incision, Goodrich said. But he said fused brains cannot be separated "without some consequence."

"The hope is that the consequence is minimum at best," he said.

Goodrich said it would be "at least a week to 10 days before we can really assess what changes have taken place." He said he was encouraged that brain swelling and blood loss were minimal, often a sign that brain damage has been avoided.

He said twins joined at the head have never been separated without at least one suffering brain damage.

He added, "Would I do it this way again? Absolutely yes."

Reconstruction of skull

After the separation, Goodrich and the boys' plastic surgeon, Dr. David Staffenberg, started covering the brains, leaving reconstruction of the skulls for later.

The coverings included some oddities—a material made from pigs' intestines was used to augment a membrane called the dura, and part of Clarence's scalp and hair was placed atop Carl's head and vice versa, Staffenberg said.

Goodrich and Staffenberg said they will be fascinated to see how Carl and Clarence react to the sight of each other. Doctors used mirrors and Velcro-headed dolls in their efforts to prepare the boys.

"There has to be enormous psychological import," Goodrich said. "But obviously they can't tell us."

Goodrich said the staff will be on the alert for any infection in the boys, leaks of spinal fluid and accumulations of liquid on the brain.

Watching out for complications

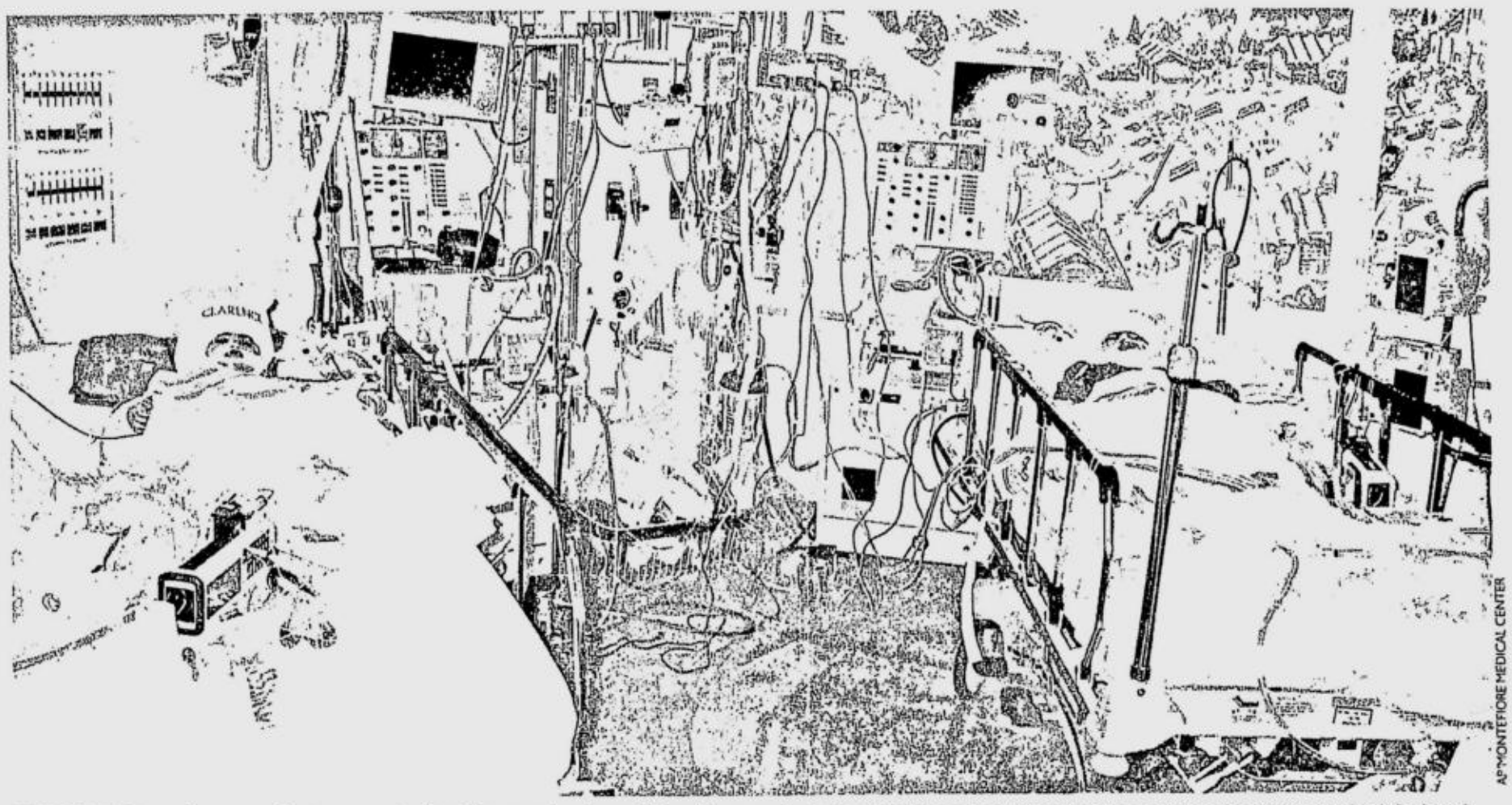
He said in the next two days, doctors will watch for the prospect of infection and other complications and that it will take up to two weeks to assess possible brain damage.

"This is an enormously complex case," Goodrich said, adding that during the surgery doctors were reassessing strategy "every 15 minutes."

Conjoined twins occur once in every 200,000 live births.

One or both twins often die after separation, and the rate of survival beyond the age of 2 is only 20 percent.

But the doctors involved in the Aguirre twins' procedure said theirs was particularly risky because of the shared skull bone and blood vessels—a condition known as craniopagus that only occurs in about one in 10 million live births.



THE HIGHLY complex operation to separate the twins may be gleaned from the seemingly chaotic wirings, instrumentations and tubes that keep track of the boys' condition inside the intensive care unit of Montefiore Medical Center. When they wake up, they'll see each other, apart and face to face for the first time.

The twins will need as many as three more operations to reconstitute their skulls.

Free services

Staffenberg said that when the boys have healed enough, they'll go back into physical therapy at Blythedale Children's Hospital in Valhalla, where they and their mother, Arlene Aguirre, have been living between surgeries at Montefiore. Both hospitals and the doctors have donated their services.

Staffenberg said the rebuilding of the skulls will be done in two or three stages. It will be delightful, he said, to have "Carl and Clarence in the operating room as separate little boys."

Like a miracle

About 20 relatives and neighbors who were praying at the Aguirres' farm house in Silay City, jumped in joy and hugged each other when the boys' mother called with the news, the twins' aunt Azela Malunes said.

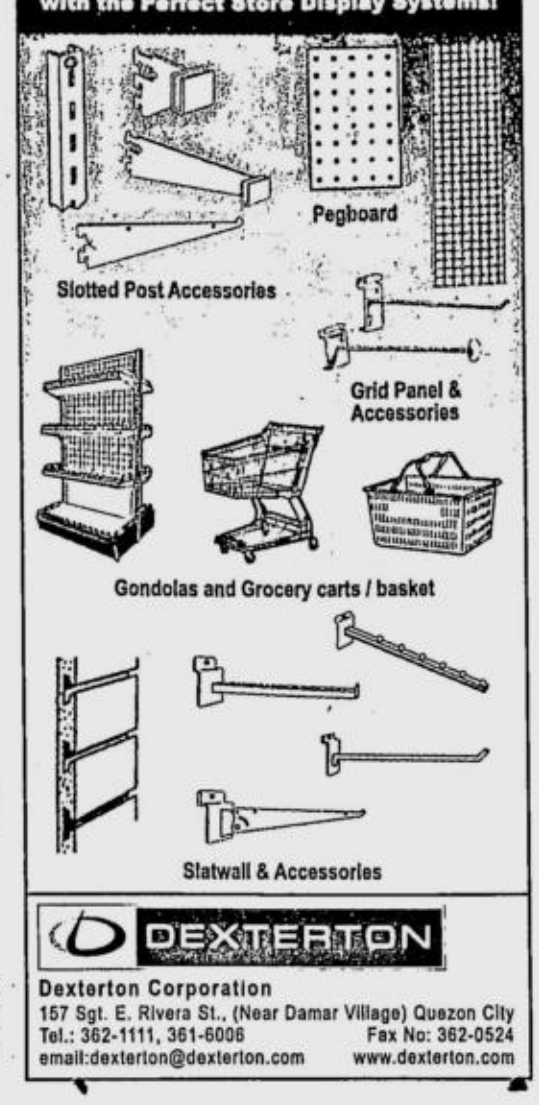
"We were very happy and we were crying in joy, because they were finally separated," Malunes said.

"It was like a miracle," the boys' uncle, Andy Aguirre said, adding the family collected donations to pay for the operation. *AP, Reuters*

TO EXPLAIN their amazing 17-hour surgical feat, Dr. James T.Goodrich, director of Pediatric Neurosurgery and Dr. David A. Staffenberg, chief plastic surgeon, speak at a press conference in New York on Thursday. AP

STORMING the heavens continue at the hometown of Carl and Clarence Aguirre in Silay City, Negros Occidental. Their relatives lead neighbors in prayers inside the village chapel. ANDY ALVAREZ/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

MOTHER Arlene Aguirre ceaselessly keeps vigil over her sons. AFP



2 Baguio artists bag awards in Asean tilt

From page A1

by Philip Morris.

Obviously surprised, Aguinaldo was near tears when his victory was announced at this year's concluding rites on Thursday last week. "I see [this award] as a compliment to my efforts in art-making, and as part of bigger challenges in the coming years," he said.

De Guia let out a big sigh: "Wow! Super-suspense these past days. I'm glad it's over."

Aguinaldo also won $15,000 for his mixed media artwork, "God is on Our Side," and De Guia $5,000 for another mixed media piece, "Mystique of the Urban Mistake."

Unanimous

"God is on Our Side" is a statement on western supremacy, particularly alluding to the United States military. Resembling a carpet or woven fabric from afar, it is made of carefully carved rubber sheets painted with printer's ink and oil.

Aguinaldo won for his meticulous eye for detail and patience in "weaving" the pieces of rubber together. He said his work, which took almost a month to finish, reflected his personal assessment of global issues.

It was the first time that he represented the country in the prestigious competition.

The decision of the five-member panel of judges was unanimous. Said chief juror Dr. Pat Hoffe of Australia: "Instead of taking sides, [Aguinaldo's art] makes us think about our own complexities and what's happening in this world. It's not standing up at the system and saying, 'I know the right way.' It's saying, 'I am part of the system.'"

None of the judges came from participating Asean countries. It was said to be the AAA's way of avoiding inevitable biases. In fact, Hoffie added, not one of them knew which artwork represented which country.

The son of filmmaker and performance artist Kidlat Tahimik, De Guia imbues his mixed media graffiti with an almost childlike disposition. "'Mystique of the Urban Mistake' plays with the mundane passages of everyday life and doesn't take things too seriously," according to Hoffie.

It seems to have been rendered by a schoolboy who recognized no boundaries, rules, or restrictions. As it turned out, it was this strong sense of artistic freedom that made De Guia's entry stand out.

In an interview following the awards rites, De Guia became contemplative, saying he realized that the recognition brought with it a huge responsibility. But he quickly gained back his composure: "I'll continue the journey on this crazy path."

The other Jurors' Choice Awardees were: Feri Eka Canda of Indonesia, with "Seribu Kepala Untukku/Mindscape," acrylic on canvas; Lin Qing Jiang Terence of Singapore, "Façade of Everyday," mixed media; "Inspirational Belief" by Kaewvisit Songwoot of Thailand, "Inspirational Belief," oil on canvas; and Do Anh Tuan of Vietnam, "Invasion of Death," oil on canvas.

Distinction

"In the Asean region, we have always been looked up to in contemporary art," said Dr. Florina H. Capistrano-Baker, director of the Ayala Museum.

The country holds the sole distinction of thrice winning the Grand Prize and a Jurors' Choice Award in a single AAA competition.

In 1995, when the AAA was held in Jakarta, the Grand Prize went to Alfredo Esquillo, and a Jurors' Choice Award to Ferdinand Doctolero. Five years later in Singapore, Nona M. Garcia won the Grand Prize, and a Jurors' Choice Award went to Ronaldo Ruiz.

Philippine entries have also won in eight out of the total of 10 AAA competitions.

Capistrano-Baker hopes that, with Filipino artists continuing to reap awards abroad, the government will beef up support for the local art community. She explained: "Art goes hand in hand with our sense of self, identity and nationhood. It makes a positive contribution in nation-building."

Unafraid

More and more mixed media renditions have been making it to the AAA lately, Capistrano-Baker noted. She said this "phenomenon" was not limited to Asia, because contemporary artists all over the world were more confidently tackling experimental art, unafraid to use new mediums and discovering new techniques.

The three other Philippine artworks in AAA 2004 were: "Preservation of Creation" by Wilson A. Belarmino, mixed media; "Barren" by Don Djerassi L. Daimacio, oil on canvas; and "Boxed In (De Kahon)" by Vincent Paul L. Padilla.

These and the two winning pieces were chosen from 570 entries in last year's Philippine Art Awards competition.

GMA to visit China, Chile

By Juliet L. Javellana

GROUNDED since January, President Macapagal-Arroyo is scheduled to make three overseas trips in the last four months of the year.

Ms Arroyo will visit China in early September to attend the International Conference on Asia Political Parties.

She is also scheduled to attend the Asia-Europe Meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam on Oct. 7-9 before joining other heads of state at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Santiago, Chile on Nov. 20-21.

At the Beijing meeting from Sept. 3 to 5, the President expects to meet Chinese leaders and Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

"I think Prime Minister Thaksin and I will be both in China, first week of September. So Vince (Energy Secretary Vince Perez) arranged a meeting between us so we can find out how far we have gone on this arrangement," she said.

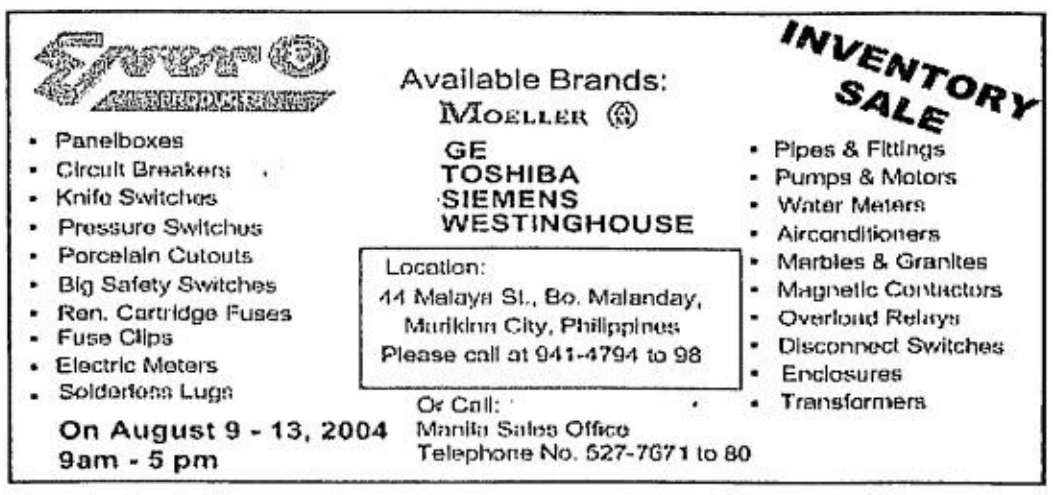
Ms Arroyo plans to take up with Shinawatra the rising prices of crude oil.

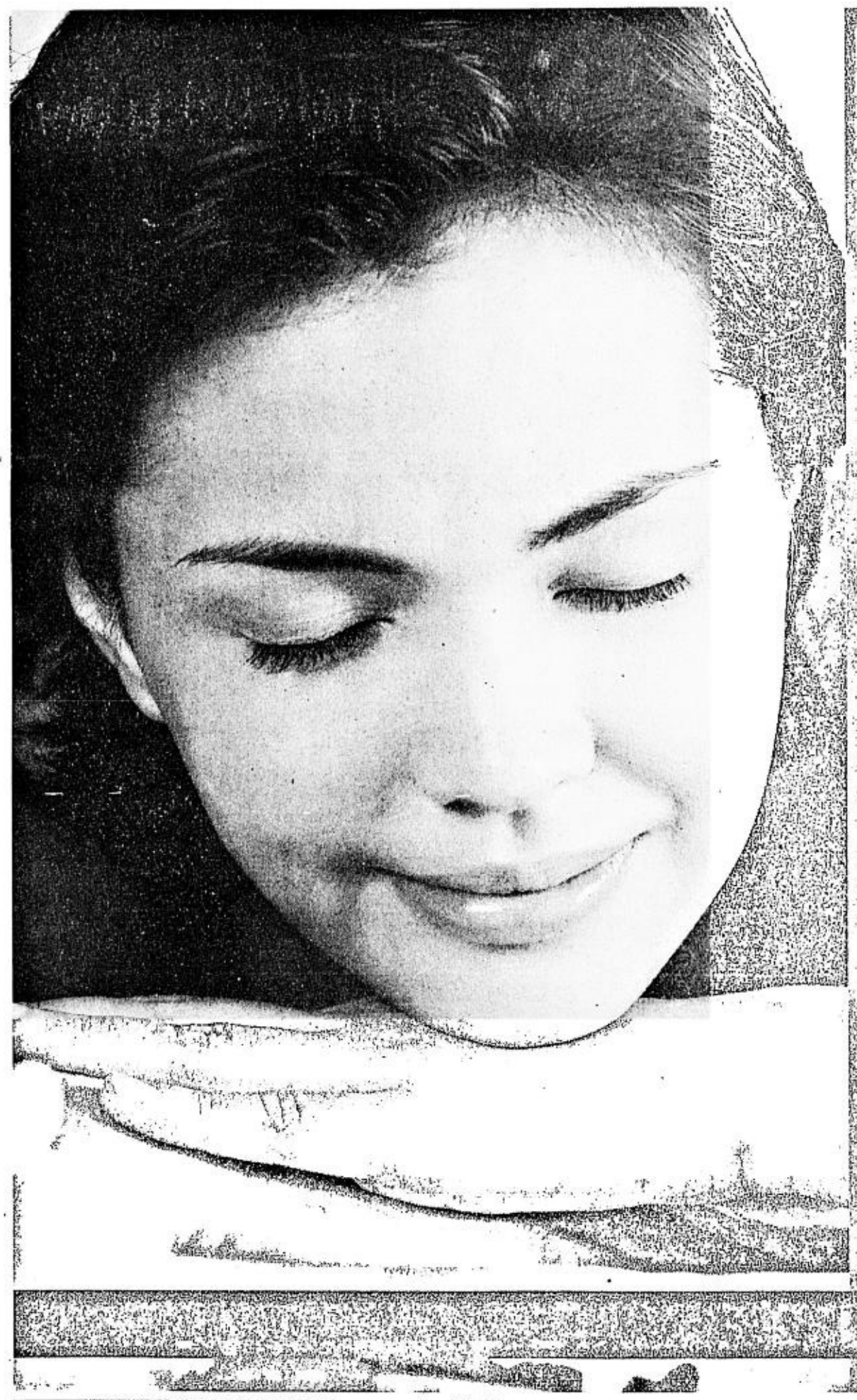
In a speech at the 25th annual general membership meeting of the Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives, Ms Arroyo said the Philippines and Thailand were working on plans to use the former US naval base in Subic as a regional fuel storage depot.

The Beijing trip would be Ms Arroyo's first overseas visit this year. Her last foreign trip was on Dec. 14-16 last year when she visited Hong Kong and Bahrain.

The Apec summit is an annual gathering of leaders of the Pacific Rim nations, which includes the Philippines and the United States. The summit would take place after the US presidential elections in November.

It could be Ms Arroyo's first meeting with the US president after the US expressed dismay at the withdrawal of the Philippine troops from Iraq last month due to the abduction of Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz.





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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Fierce clashes threaten Iraq truce

NAJAF, Iraq—Followers of rebel cleric Moqtada Sadr shot down a US helicopter on Thursday in the Iraqi city of Najaf and two were killed by British troops in Basra in clashes that threatened to reignite a Shiite uprising.

The fighting in Najaf was the heaviest in the city since a rebellion by Sadr's followers in April and May. The city is home to the holiest shrines in Shiite Islam, and most Iraqi Shiites react with outrage when clashes erupt near the sacred sites.

The US military said it estimated seven of Sadr's fighters were killed in Najaf, and British forces said they killed two militiamen in Basra after an attack by Sadr's men.

"Coalition forces were attacked with small arms fire and returned fire, killing two enemy fighters," a British military spokesperson said, adding that no British soldiers were wounded.

Later on Thursday a spokesperson for Sadr, Sheikh Mahmoud al-Sudani, called for the restoration of a truce agreed in June between Sadr's forces and US troops.

That agreement ended weeks of fighting that killed hundreds of Iraqis in April and May. Under the truce, US troops said they would not enter parts of Najaf. There was no immediate word of a response from US forces.

Guerrillas had earlier attacked a US convoy near Najaf with a rocket-propelled grenade and small arms fire, killing one American soldier and wounding five, the US military said.

Clashes also broke out in impoverished Shiite areas of Baghdad. A spokesperson for Sadr in Baghdad said one militiaman was killed in the clashes with US troops.

The US military said the crew of the downed helicopter in Najaf were wounded and evacuated. Sadr's aides said the cleric's Mehdi Army militia had shot down the aircraft.

Iraq's health ministry said at least three civilians were killed in the Najaf fighting—including an ambulance driver whose ambulance was hit—and 25 wounded.

An aide to Iraq's most revered Shi'ite cleric, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, said Sistani was receiving treatment in Najaf for heart problems and the clashes could affect his health.

"There is fear that what is happening in Najaf might affect the medical care he needs," Hamed Khafaf said.

The US military said the fighting began at about 3 a.m. when "a significant number of aggressors" believed to be Mehdi Army militia attacked a police station with machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms. *Reuters*

Suspected plotters arrested amid alert

NEW YORK—Worldwide crackdowns Thursday on suspected terrorist plotters followed a heightened US attack alert, netting a pair of men accused of trying to buy a shoulder-fired missile, arrested in New York state.

The same al-Qaida intelligence that prompted a heightened US attack alert on Sunday also netted suspects as far away as Pakistan and Britain.

In separate development, one of the most wanted militants in Saudi Arabia, Fares al-Zahrani, was arrested by security forces Thursday evening, part of the kingdom's effort to end 15 months of extremist attacks, the interior ministry said.

In the New York state capital Albany, two men were arrested late Wednesday and charged in a plot to purchase the missile from an undercover agent.

Mohammed Mosharref Hossain, 49, was a founder of Masjid As-Salam Mosque and had recruited the other suspect, Yassin Muhiddin Aref, 34, as the mosque's imam, prosecutors said.

But authorities said those arrests were unrelated to the heightened terror alert.

US officials announced Sunday that al-Qaida had targeted the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington, as well as the New York Stock Exchange and other financial institutions.

In response, authorities raised the color-coded alert level from yellow, or "elevated," to orange, or "high," for New York, Washington and Newark, New Jersey, and boosted security around the targeted areas.

The alert level was raised after information was gathered in Pakistan from computer files belonging to an al-Qaida suspect identified by the Pakistani press as Muhammad Naeem Noor Khan, a Pakistani computer engineer, and Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a Tanzanian indicted over his alleged role in the 1998 US embassy bombings in east Africa.

About 20 al-Qaida suspects have been captured by Pakistani security forces in the past three weeks, Pakistan Interior Minister Faisal Saleh Hayat said Thursday.

The New York Times on Thursday cited US officials who said that the information triggered the worldwide crackdown on al-Qaida. *AFP*

AN ISRAELI girl plays in the West Bank settlement of Maale Adumim Aug. 5. Israel's housing ministry is planning to build a major new settlement which would link East Jerusalem with Maale Adumin, the largest of the West Bank settlements, public radio reported. AFP

Israel to scale back construction in key settlement

JERUSALEM—Israel will scale back its controversial construction of new houses in a key West Bank settlement following US pressure, public television said late Thursday.

The government has decided to cut about a quarter of the 600 new homes in Maale Adumin it had planned for the largest of the West Bank settlements, it said.

The mayor of the settlement of some 28,000 inhabitants, Benny Kachriel, told television "the construction of this lot of 600 houses was already approved during the era of Ehud Barak's Labor government" in 1999.

"We already sold 465 of these house, and the freeze announced Thursday night concerns the rest of these house," he said.

The announcement came after a meeting between top White House envoy Elliott Abrams, the deputy to National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in which the US envoy was expected to criticize the construction plans, as well as a blueprint for a new West Bank settlement.

Abrams also met with Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, who said afterward: "Israel will respect all of its commitments under the road-map," referring to the Middle East peace plan endorsed by both the Palestinians and Israel last year.

Under the plan, Israel is required to freeze all settlement activity in the occupied territories. About 100 settlements have sprung up since Sharon took office in 2000.

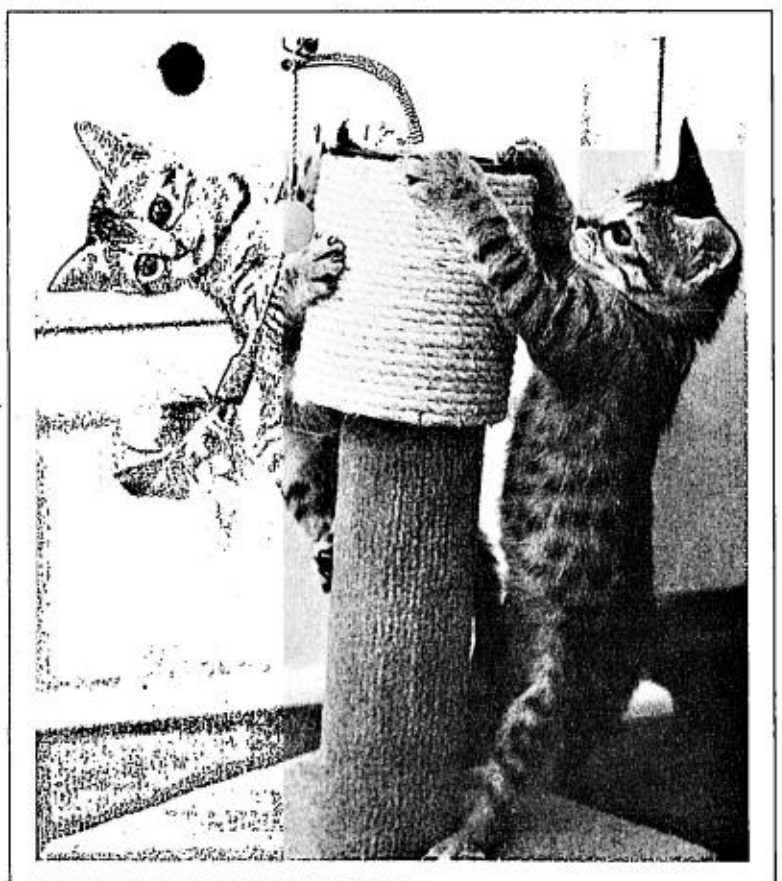
Public radio reported earlier Thursday that detailed planning work, including the tendering process, for the new neighborhood between Maale Adumin and Jerusalem was expected to be completed in the next six months after which construction on the 1,500-hectare development may begin.

A US source said: "I would think there's some concern about all this. It does not seem to be compatible with the roadmap which the Israelis have accepted. He (Abrams) will want to hear how they are going to square that circle."

A housing ministry official denied that any authorization for a "concrete" building project linking Jerusalem and Maale Adumin had been given.

"A general plan, which was approved in principle 10 years ago, exists, but there is nothing new," he said on condition of anonymity. "We have enough trouble as it is to sell the thousands of apartments which already exist."

The Maariv daily said however that while the plan was first conceived by late premier Yitzhak Rabin it has "begun to gather steam... very quietly and very surreptitiously." *AFP*



CLONED PET FOR $50,000
Baba Ganoush, right, plays with her cloned sibling Tabouli, Aug. 5, in San Francisco. The kittens are the first two cats cloned by chromatin transfer, a new cloning technology developed by Genetic Savings & Clone, a pet gene banking and cloning company, who produced the kittens as a precursor to production of the first batch of cat clones for the public. It will cost $50,000 to have your cat cloned. AP

SE Asian navies to combat piracy in Malacca strait

JAKARTA—Thailand will join three other Southeast Asian navies in patrolling the vital Strait of Malacca shipping lane to combat piracy and terrorism, Indonesia's military chief said.

The development came after Admiral Sir Alan West, Britain's top navy officer, said in an interview published on Thursday that intelligence showed Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida planned to target merchant shipping to disrupt world trade.

Ports and strategic sea lanes such as the Strait of Malacca posed the biggest risks as ships stack up in numbers, West was quoted as saying by Lloyd's List maritime newspaper.

More than 50,000 commercial vessels sail the 800-km channel each year.

Gen. Endriartono Sutarto said Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, which launched joint patrols in the strait in July, were open to offers of help from other countries.

"Last week, we expanded with Thailand to conduct coordinated patrols. We are still open to other countries outside the current four if they want to offer assistance," Sutarto told reporters late on Thursday night. He did not elaborate, but the issue of sovereignty is sensitive.

Participation by Thailand would be a departure from previous policy of only involving the littoral states.

A top Thai navy officer said Bangkok and Jakarta were still in consultations over patrols in overlapping waters in the Andaman Sea at the Western entrance of the Strait of Malacca and there were no plans actually to enter the strait.

Any agreement would need approval from both governments.

"But this is a major positive development in relations of the Thai and Indonesian navies," Capt. Wasinsan Chantawarin, head of the Thai Naval Operations Task Force, said Friday.

A senior Indonesian navy officer said a greater intelligence capacity was needed to combat militants and that more help was needed. *Reuters*

Hiroshima mayor hits US bid to make small nuke bombs

HIROSHIMA, Japan—The mayor of Hiroshima rebuked Washington on Friday —the 59th anniversary of his city's atomic bombing by the United States—for wanting to develop small nuclear weapons that he feared would be easier to use.

Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba made the remarks at a ceremony attended by about 40,000 people, including Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi plus survivors and relatives of victims of the world's first atomic attack.

"The egocentric world view of the US government is reaching extremes," Akiba told the annual memorial ceremony at the city's Peace Park, near where the bomb was dropped.

"Ignoring the United Nations and its foundation of international law, the US has resumed research to make nuclear weapons smaller and more 'usable.'"

The Peace Bell was tolled at 8:15 a.m.—the moment a US warplane dropped the bomb on Aug. 6, 1945 and destroyed the city—and there was a minute of silence.

"The morning of Aug. 6, 59 years ago, was just another summer morning, but a single atomic bomb changed it into a morning that humankind will never forget," 11-year-old Koya Yurino told the ceremony.

Paper cranes symbolizing peace were draped around the park and incense burned on prayer altars as Akiba placed three books containing the names of the bomb's victims under the park's arch-shaped cenotaph.

The names of 5,142 people who died recently were added to the list of victims, bringing the total number recognized by the city to 237,062. A few thousand names are added each year.

The bomb had killed some 140,000 people by the end of 1945, out of Hiroshima's estimated population of 350,000. Thousands more succumbed to illness and injuries later.

The southwestern city of Nagasaki was bombed three days after Hiroshima, leading to Japan's surrender and the end of World War Two.

Japan, where people are raised on stories of the suffering in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has been staunchly pacifist and anti-nuclear since its defeat, and its postwar constitution renounces the right to go to war.

But with the average age of Hiroshima's survivors now well over 70, there are signs that support for the country to assume a greater global military role is growing.

Even talk of becoming a nuclear power is no longer taboo.

However, Koizumi repeated a pledge that Japan—the only nation to suffer an atomic attack—would work for nuclear disarmament.

"We will maintain the pacifist constitution under our strong resolve to never again repeat the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," he said at the ceremony.

Under Koizumi, Japan has passed a law allowing its military to participate in the rebuilding of Iraq and has sent 550 soldiers to Iraq in its largest post-war dispatch of troops.

Koizumi's ruling party and the largest opposition party are both working on drafts to revise the constitution, whose Article Nine renounces war as a means of settling international disputes. *Reuters*

DOVES flutter over the flame for peace before the gutted A-bomb dome at a ceremony commemorating the 59th anniversary of the world's first atomic bomb blast at Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan, Aug. 6. REUTERS

UN, Sudan agree to disarm marauders in Darfur

KHARTOUM, Sudan—Sudan and the United Nations have agreed a plan to tackle the humanitarian crisis and disarm marauding militia in Darfur in an effort to avert threatened UN sanctions, UN officials said on Thursday.

The agreement in Khartoum, which was not released, contains detailed steps to be taken in the next 30 days "on how to begin to disarm the Janjaweed and other outlawed groups, on improving security in Darfur, and on addressing the humanitarian crisis," UN associate spokesperson Denise Cook said in New York.

The UN Security Council last week adopted a resolution demanding Khartoum disarm Janjaweed auxiliary militias, accused of pillaging, raping and driving African villagers off their land. It asked UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to report in 30 days on how much progress the government has made.

The resolution said that if Sudan was not complying it would consider imposing unspecified sanctions.

Jan Pronk, Annan's special representative, told reporters in Khartoum that the government had kept its promise on providing access in Darfur for relief organizations.

Pronk said he and Sudanese Foreign Minister Osman Mustafa Ismail agreed on detailed policy measures that needed to be approved by Sudan's Cabinet to avoid threatened sanctions.

"If that text is agreed upon by the (Sudanese) Cabinet as a whole and if that text is implemented, then I have very good hope that the Security Council... can only come to the conclusion that there is indeed substantial progress," Pronk said.

Some 30,000 people are estimated to have been killed and 2.2 million are in urgent need of food, medicine and shelter in the western Darfur region, where two main rebel groups launched a revolt last year, complaining of official neglect. The Janjaweed then retaliated.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell wrote in The Wall Street Journal on Thursday that Sudan had not done enough.

"Violence and atrocities on a wide scale continue to be committed against the civilian population in Darfur," he said. "The Sudanese government has not, however, taken decisive steps to end the violence."

At the United Nations, US Ambassador John Danforth said Khartoum had to make sure its military was not "unloading bombs from planes" or "using helicopters to destroy villages."

"If this situation continues, it's going to be very visible," Danforth said. "The government of Sudan will be an international pariah, and there will be consequences."

More than 100,000 besieged people from Darfur had fled to neighboring Chad. French Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie is to fly to Chad Friday to visit aid workers and French troops helping refugees. France has deployed some 200 troops in Chad. *Reuters*

Iraqis face own kidnapping epidemic

BAGHDAD—"Give us $100,000, or we'll you give you back your son's head," the voice on the other end of the phone spat at Leon Katchader. "And if you tell anyone about this, we'll come and blow your house up."

Two days earlier, his 14-year-old son, Rami, was snatched from around the corner of their house. And the car repair shop owner was only just beginning to grasp the sophistication of the racket behind his son's kidnapping.

"Where am I going to get $100,000? Who told you I was some kind of millionaire?" Katchader pleaded with the man on the phone.

But the kidnappers knew he could afford to pay a ransom. They knew that three days earlier, the family had been in Syria, where one of Katchader's four daughters was married. They even knew Katchader's nickname, Levon.

"I can only afford $3,000. And as God gave me my son, God can take him away," Katchader said. Then he hung up the phone and collapsed.

While scores of foreigners have been kidnapped by militants as leverage in their fight against the government and coalition forces, Iraqis have faced their own epidemic of kidnappings in the chaos since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime last year. The motive is simply money.

There are no accurate numbers on how many have been kidnapped, but most Iraqis have a story to tell about someone they know who was kidnapped—an immediate family member, a relative, or a next-door neighbor.

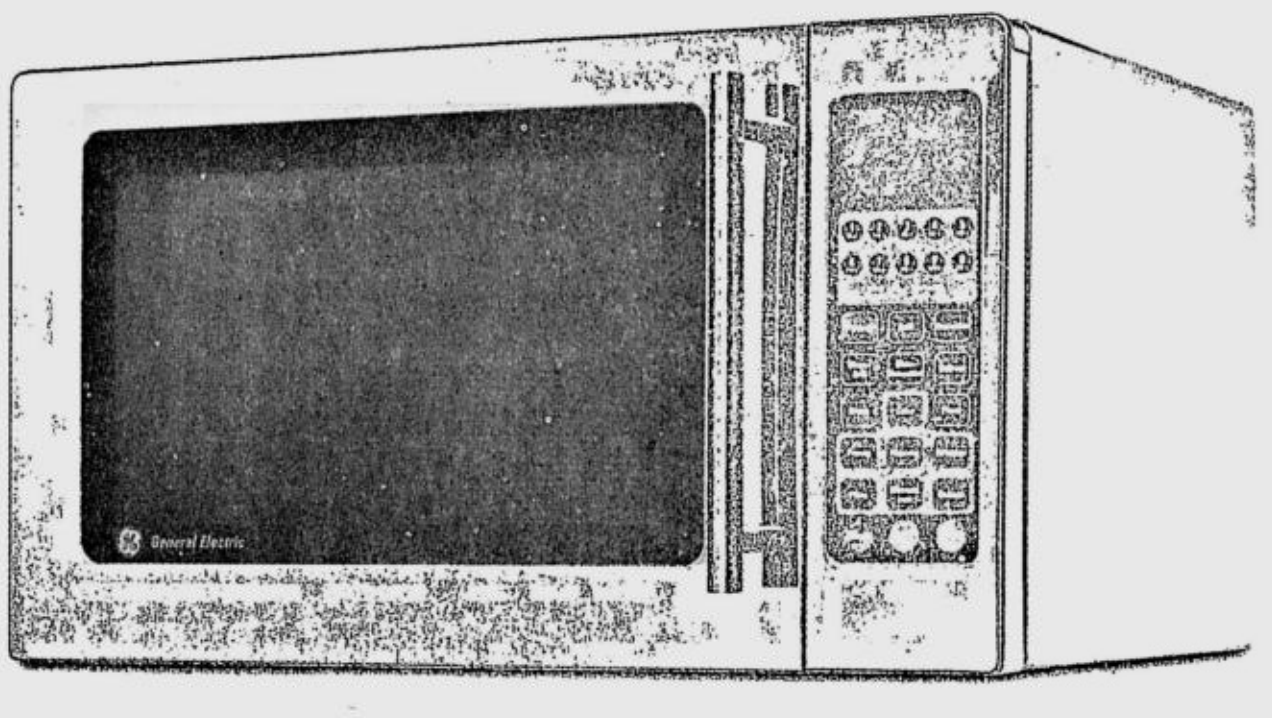
"This has repeatedly happened, and we are doing our best to deal with it," said Georges Sada, spokesman for Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi.

One of the biggest problems is keeping kidnappers in jail because the legal system isn't working, said Sabah Kadhim, an Interior Ministry spokesman.

"Even if they capture one of them, they are soon let go. They realize you can't go to jail, so they carry on," Kadhim said.

He cited the October 2002 amnesty, in which Saddam freed about 100,000 prisoners right before the war, as the main reason for the persistent crime.

Iraqi police are struggling to equip themselves and carry out rudimentary tasks, especially given their own precarious safety. Insurgents have attacked police stations and recruitment centers, vowing to target anyone cooperating with coalition authorities. *AP*



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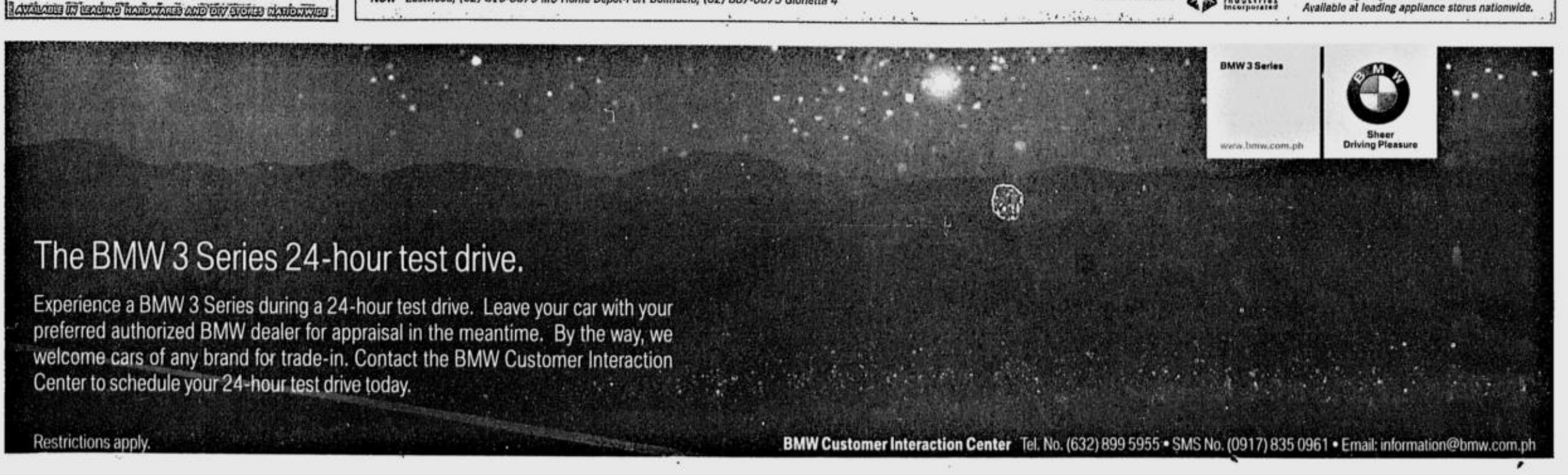

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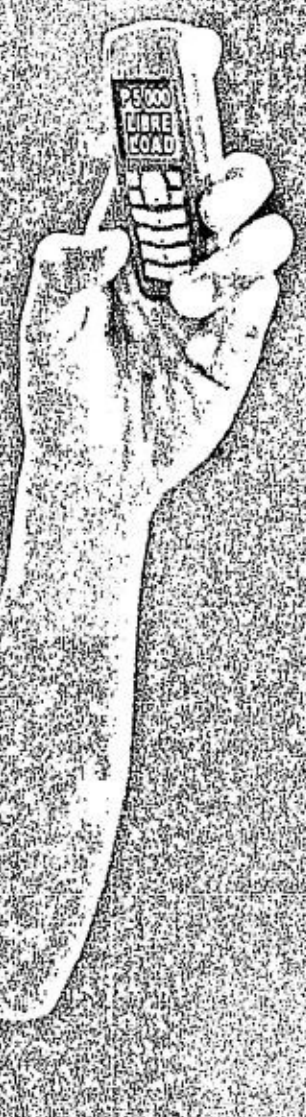

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Load Range	Libre Load
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P71-P75	P15
P76-P80	P16
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P91-P95	P19
P96-P100	P20
P101-P105	P21

Load Range	Libre Load
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OPINION

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Final arbiter

IT is basic to our system that Congress passes the laws, the executive enforces them, and that when controversy arises, the Supreme Court interprets them and decides if they are constitutional or not. This basic concept is one that needs to be drummed into the heads of the public and government officials from time to time, simple as it is.

EDITORIAL

Take the recent statements from Malacañang concerning the courts looking into questions about the generation of electric power. The Palace has asked the courts, in effect, to refrain from looking into decisions of the Energy Regulatory Commission, saying it is the ERC that has the expertise to look into such issues. While the cases pending before the board have reached the Court of Appeals, they have yet to reach the Supreme Court. Obviously, their reaching the high court is only a matter of time, which is why Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. has weighed in with a statement that while the justices may not be experts per se, on economic matters, they are fully equipped to wrestle with legal issues concerning the economy.

Business has taken a cue from the Palace and has resumed its usual complaint about the supposed dire effects of the protectionist and nationalist nature of our Constitution. Such musings on the part of big business are within the nature of the business mentality, but, we submit, are a case of big business barking up the wrong tree.

The Supreme Court and other courts cannot write laws. Congress makes the laws, while there are certain residual lawmaking or at least policymaking powers that the executive possesses as well. The Supreme Court did not write the Constitution, it can only interpret it on a case-to-case basis to answer legal questions and controversies.

Therefore, when the Palace and businessmen get all exercised about the implications of constitutional decisions by the Supreme Court, they ignore the fact that responsibility for policies not to business' liking must rest foursquare on Congress.

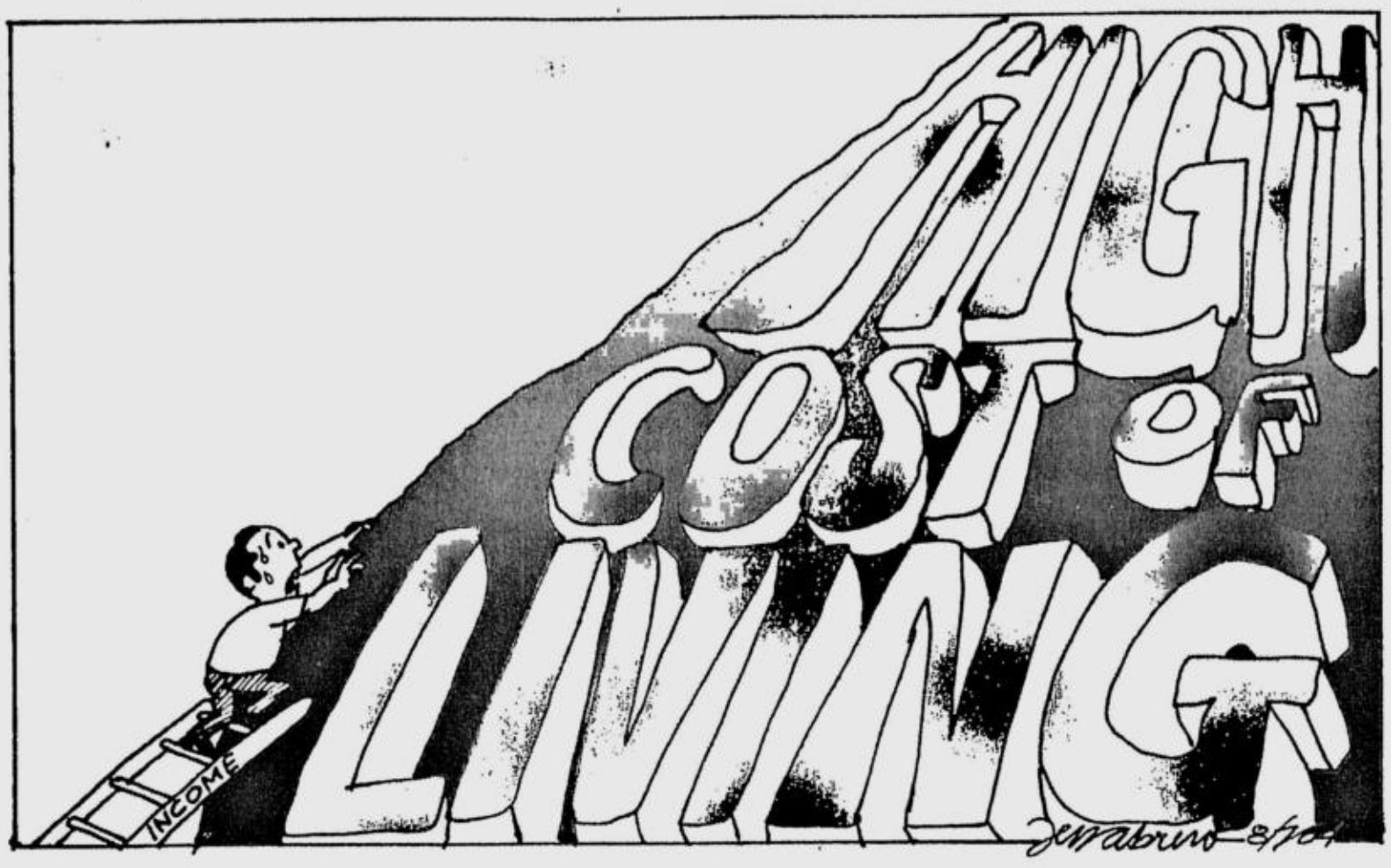
Economic policy, flawed or not, must be given substance by laws and regulations and the use of powers that must all be in keeping with the Constitution. Whether the Supreme Court likes a law or understands the reasons for certain laws and actions by the other branches of government is beside the point. The Supreme Court is tasked with the duty to ensure that all laws and government policies referred to it must be in keeping with the letter and the spirit of the Constitution.

So if business doesn't like what the Supreme Court does, it must ask itself whether the problem lies with the Court or with the representatives of the people in Congress, the President, or the Constitution itself.

In general, our broad constitutional principles since 1935 have been protectionist and nationalist. This was a reaction to the unbridled capitalism of the American colonial era, and the fears shared by our founding fathers in 1935, and accepted by the framers of subsequent charters, that government has a vital role to play in national development, and that there must be a manifestly pro-Filipino bias in our government's economic policies. The Supreme Court from time to time and case to case must give substance to these constitutional, economic requirements. It does so by issuing decisions that are, in turn, questioned and even questionable at the time, but which may in turn be corrected by subsequent Supreme Court decisions on similar or related cases.

The system is far from perfect, and there are Supreme Courts that are superior and inferior to those that have come before, depending on the composition of the Court. Business and government have latched on to certain Supreme Court decisions in the past that were seen as too strict or too narrow in their interpretation. But under our system that is the only way: there will be bad and good decisions, although the system is the best guarantor that over time, bad decisions will be rectified by new ones. The thing is, in the end there must be one, supreme and final arbiter of the law. And that is the role of our Supreme Court.

No one likes to lose a case, business least of all. But legal setbacks must never be confused with the supposed total unsuitability of the system. The system has served us fairly well—and there is, short of anarchy or revolution, no other alternative. Business and the executive should know this most of all.



That absurd law

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

NOW they're thinking of amending the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003. It should not have been enacted at all in the first place.

The measure was passed by Congress, including the opposition members. It was speedily approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo. It was then as easily upheld by the Supreme Court.

In several articles in this column, I attacked the plan to grant suffrage to Filipinos abroad who had acquired permanent residence in other countries as immigrants. As such, they could no longer satisfy the residence requirements for suffrage as laid down by the Constitution.

Art. V prescribes that for the exercise of suffrage the Filipino who is at least 18 years of age must be a resident of the Philippines for no less than one year and in the place where he intends to vote for no less than six months.

An immigrant to another country is no longer a resident of the Philippines. It is an accepted axiom that one cannot have more than one residence; the acquisition of a new residence forfeits the original residence.

Yet the Supreme Court, sustaining the President and Congress, chose to disregard that universal rule. It preferred to accept the "august" words of Fr. Joaquin Bernas holding such errant Filipinos as still qualified voters in the Philippines. Four justices wisely dissented.

The doubtful decision held that such migrants could still vote in the 2004 elections for the president, the vice president, senators and party-list representatives. It made a distinction between "residence" and "domicile" and said the first could be dual but not the latter. Hence, although the migrant was permanently resident in the foreign country of his choice, he was still a resident of the Philippines.

In this column on Feb. 2, 2003, I explained:

"Residence is defined as the place where one habitually lives and to which whenever he is absent he intends to return. It is judicially interpreted in the sense of domicile, which includes the element of permanence. Immigration, according to Bouvier's Law Dictionary, is 'the coming into the country of foreigners for permanent residence.' Hence, a Filipino who migrates to another country becomes a permanent resident there and should not be allowed to vote in our country as an absentee voter."

The Filipino citizens who ratified the Constitution of 1987 understood the term "residence" as used in Art. V in that generally accepted sense. Yet, the Supreme Court rejected the well-known rule that words used in statutes and especially the Constitution should be given their ordinary connotation. It instead complicated the meaning of Art. V beyond the intendment and understanding of the people.

Curiously, although the absentee voters were considered qualified to vote on May 10, they were nevertheless required to file an affidavit promising to reside permanently in the Philippines within three years. If they were qualified at the time they voted, why did they have to promise under oath that they would return permanently to this country?

There is also the question of how the government will enforce that required sworn promise to reacquire permanent residence in the Philippines. The absurd law ominously says that failure to comply will result in the absentee voters' names being stricken from the list of voters. Big deal! And yet, their votes may have been lawfully credited last May for candidates who might otherwise have lost.

The Commission on Elections has reported that only an insignificant number of overseas Filipinos have cast their votes under the controversial law. Most of them were overseas workers in the Middle East who have not lost their residence in the Philippines by working abroad. But the immigrants who have acquired a new life in some foreign country that has welcomed them have not been similarly interested.

Despite the millions of pesos spent by the government to implement the Overseas Absentee Voting Act, there were many European countries with Filipino immigrants, or only temporary workers still legally resident in the Philippines, where the vote expected from the Filipino citizens was exactly zero. There were many Filipinos abroad who were not interested at all in the dubious privilege being offered them by our government.

The Overseas Absentee Voting Act stands as one of the stupidest laws ever passed by Congress with the approval of the President of the Philippines and the validation of the Supreme Court. It cannot be sustained on practical grounds, as subsequent events have demonstrated. The legal arguments given by the Supreme Court in its support are unacceptable, even to the ordinary layman. It is a law that has been imposed by the three departments of the government upon an unconvinced citizenry.

If Congress wants to amend the Overseas Absentee Voting Act instead of repealing it altogether, I suggest that it confine its benefits to the Filipino workers who have not abandoned their residence in the Philippines and are abroad only for temporary employment. Our students in foreign universities should also be included. But that absurd provision allowing immigrants in foreign countries to vote here as still resident Filipinos should be eliminated. Our laws should not proclaim the ignorance, not to say vacuity, of our supposedly responsible leaders.

Like sandalwood

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

FEELING depressed? Fearful? Insecure? Confused? Helpless? Doubt-wracked? Some or all of the above? Join the club. There is an antidote that I highly recommend: buy a ticket to the "Sandalwood Concert" on Aug. 17 at the Ballroom of the Manila Peninsula. You can expect a massive dose of hope—"a passion for what is possible"—from songs written by Carmen "Pinky" Valdes and sung by her former Assumption students, led by Joey Albert (the only exception being Cocoy Laurel).

Two weeks ago, Ruby Gonzalez Meyer sent me an advance copy of the Sandalwood CD, one of four launchings that will be held between now and December (the others being in San Francisco, Vancouver and New York). I listened to it, loved what I heard, and have replayed that CD about four or five times since then, deriving hope, comfort and inspiration each time.

I'm not alone in my reaction. Fr. James Reuter writes, "It is a privilege and a joy and a touching experience just to be exposed to this album. The lyrics of the songs are sheer poetry flowing from a gentle, beautiful soul—from the heart of one who has suffered. They are born of deep reflection, a realistic view of God's world, prayer and pain."

The music is great—described as "unlike any other spiritual CD you have ever heard before," ranging from ballads and blues to experimental jazz and Celtic compositions, not to mention a Latin beat or two. They are all joyful sounds, and were composed by Pinky herself or in collaboration with others, Jose Mari Chan and Socorro de Castro among them.

Who is Pinky Valdes? And why Sandalwood?

I first met Pinky at the Camp Aguinaldo main gate, some time near midnight at the start of the Edsa Revolt in 1986. The gate was closed, we were inside the camp, and there was a large and growing crowd outside, waiting for news about what was happening to Johnny Ponce Enrile and his group who were holed up in one of the buildings. Together with Techie Velasquez, I had just come from seeing them, and had been charged to convey their gratitude to the people outside, as well as a short list of basic foodstuffs. There was this beautiful blonde at the gate, whom I mistook for a foreign correspondent until she helpfully supplied the Filipino words that I was groping for, even as she made sure I wouldn't fall from our precarious position at the top of the gate. Pinky was that beautiful blonde.

Despite the tension, we both found it hilarious that the very fair, American-looking woman knew more Filipino than brown-skinned, Filipino-looking yours truly. From the beginning, I took note of her composure and air of inner strength.

And no wonder. I found out later (when she joined AWARE, to which I belonged) that she was a former Assumption nun—a very popular one. As Sister Jude, she was legend to the Assumption students during her 14-year teaching stint at the school, where she taught all grades from kindergarten to college and graduate school. She exuded a combination of goodness and glamour (which sounds oxymoronic for a nun, but not with Pinky), strictness and humor, cerebration and passion (for God), which her students found irresistible. It also helped that she played a mean guitar (she was known as "The Singing Nun"). The moving spirits behind the Sandalwood "Project" are all former students who have maintained their ties with her, even though she left the convent in 1976.

Her leaving the convent did not change her. While she is now definitely more glamorous (a little lipstick can do a lot), it is obvious that her passion for Christ is a lifelong one. She is based in the United States, as a human resource professional, and obtained a second master's degree in Theology, and a doctorate in Spirituality. Her dissertation: "Candles in Babylon: The Imagination of Hope in the Poetry of Denise Levertov."

She identifies with the late poet-activist (well known in the United States during the Vietnam War), not only because of the poetry connection (Pinky may read a couple of her own poems as her contribution to the concert on Aug. 17) but also because they both share a great devotion to Julian of Norwich, a 14th century anchoress who displayed a positive and joyful attitude untypical of her time—amid the Black Death, a corrupt Church hierarchy, the Inquisition, the Peasant Revolt.

Now, about Sandalwood, the title of the album and the title of the first song in it. It comes from Pinky's novice mistress, Mother Angela Ansaldo, who told her about the old Spanish proverb, "Be like the sandalwood which perfumes the ax that wounds it." Impressed, Pinky started to compose "Sandalwood" while she was sick with a devastating flu when she was 20 years old and a newly professed nun. Being like sandalwood, she says, means that whatever you get in life in terms of negativity, give it back in something positive. Thus, the CD is "about hope and that which hope embraces."

For P1,000, folks, you get to enjoy terrific music, and a lesson in positive thinking from a woman whose inner beauty far exceeds the not inconsiderable outward manifestations. Plus, you get to contribute to the Chosen Children Foundation for abandoned and disabled children, to the Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, and to the Assumption Educational Center in Bukidnon.

All this, and heaven, too. See you there.

Without RP, Iraq coalition would collapse

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said recently that the Philippines has been dropped from the US-led "Coalition of the Willing" following a policy set by the 32 coalition members of "unequivocal rejection of terrorism." The inference is that RP was dropped due to the government's pullout of its small troop contingent to secure freedom for the kidnapped truck driver Angelo de la Cruz.

The Bush administration is understandably miffed by President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision. But Boucher surely knows that there are today some 4,200 Filipinos in Iraq working in the camps of the 32 coalition members, performing various functions crucial to the coalition's operations. A source told this columnist two weeks ago that if all those Pinoys were to pull out of Iraq, the coalition would collapse. So much for being "out of the coalition."

* * *

The US presidential elections this November are deemed so tight that no pollster wants to predict the outcome. As a result, George W. Bush and John Kerry are courting the various minority groups, such as Muslim Americans and Hispanics. The Bush administration has been hard on RP after the pullout, but it could soften up if the two million people of Filipino origin were to give him a clear message, the way the Muslim Americans are now doing. But are US Pinoys organized politically?

* * *

A recent media report said one Franklin U. Ty was accusing Director General Lilia de Lima of the Philippine Export Zone Authority and three of her people of extorting from his firm P2 million in the guise of a "request for financial arrangement." Ty's problem, however, is that De Lima has built a solid reputation and his allegation just won't fly.

De Lima's troubles apparently began when the Peza board decided unanimously to cancel the certificate of registration of Pearl City Manufacturing Corp., a used-clothing importing firm, after it was unable to explain the disappearance of nearly 8 million kilos of used clothing, which were imported tax- and duty-free from January 2003 to March 2004. But Peza was just carrying out a final warning issued in May 1999 to the firm.

De Lima has protested the brazen attack on her integrity, citing the numerous reforms she instituted at Peza to eliminate graft and corruption and testimonials from the business sector, particularly the over 1,200 companies inside the 65 economic zones, to Peza's professionalism, service and unquestioned integrity. I've known De Lima from many years and I can tell her no one would give her accuser any credence.

* * *

The INQUIRER's coverage of the incredible story of conjoined twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre was the best of the lot. I myself have been looking closely into this medical phenomenon ever since PAL Foundation director, Carmen Aquino-Sarmiento, guested in the dzRH show I co-host with Cecile Alvarez, before Menchu flew to the US for the first of four operations on the twins. Since then I've learned that "craniopagus twins" or those conjoined at the head are very rare, occurring in just one out of every two million births. Operations to separate them in infancy or childhood have been reported in 30 to 40 cases since the 1920s, and one of the most famous involved the 29-year-old Iranian twins, Ladan and Laleh Bijani, whose surgical separation in Singapore unfortunately led to their deaths.

* * *

Few people probably know that quite a number of conjoined twins with different body parts attached have been operated on, many of them successfully, by Filipino doctors right here. But operations on craniopagus twins, such as the Aguirre boys, have been few. One was done at the Makati Medical Center where both patients died. But another craniopagus separation done at the Medical Center Manila by a team led by Dr. Eduardo Mercado resulted in one of twins surviving. She is now in her late teens and doing well, except for a slight limp. Another operation on twins joined at the side of the head, a less complicated problem than the Aguirres', was done at the Philippine General Hospital by a team led by Dr. Camelia Posoncuy, and both patients are alive and well.

* * *

Dr. Josefina Almonte, who chairs the PGH department of surgery, informed me that 15 cases were evaluated at the government hospital but only 11 were operated upon (the four others were deemed inoperable). Of the 11 cases, which include the craniopagus case, six were thoracopagus (joined at the chest), two omphalopagus (joined at the abdomen), two ischiopagus (joined at the crotch and with shared genitalia) and one pygopagus (joined at the back). Nine operations were successful, with all the patients surviving, except for one case where only one lived. In another case, twins conjoined at the back were successfully separated at the Makati Medical Center about 12 years ago.

* * *

Reports say the Aguirre twins were finally separated by a team of about 30 doctors in the Montefiore Hospital in New York City, one of only 10 hospitals in the US equipped to conduct such operations. The PGH, said Dr. Almonte, has an operating team of 27 doctors and consultants, including seven neurologists, five plastic surgeons, 10 thoracic surgeons and seven pediatric surgeons. She said Filipino doctors have the expertise to operate on Siamese twins, but the problem is they have "to scrounge around for funds to perform those operations." Reports say the medical fees and hospitalization costs in New York for the Aguirre twins, including their post-operation rehabilitation, could add up to $2 million. In the PGH, says Almonte, the team can operate for about P500,000, but even this is not easy to come by.

Another visit to paradise

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IF there was ever a time we needed a break from the city, this was it. My nieces Fani and Dada, their husbands Jonathan and Todd and my nephew Dennis had come all the way from the United States to be by their mother's side. A week after her death, they had seen little of the country, having been confined to the Rose Princess Home in Cabuyao, Laguna, where Neneng passed away, and the St. Arnold Janssen Hall of Christ the King Seminary where the Masses and prayers were said.

"Why don't you visit Tagaytay?" suggested our Tita Chul Azarcon, who has a small vacation home there. At that moment, the thought of leaving the city confines and enjoying the cool mountain air seemed immediately beguiling. Annie Cruz, whom we consider family, being my sister Chona's sister-in-law, offered to treat us to a sumptuous lunch at their family owned Josephine's restaurant. But where would we all stay?

This was when I thought of Sonya Garcia and her Sonya's Bed and Breakfast that my husband and I were lucky enough to sample early this year. I got on the phone to Sonya and was greeted by her warm commiseration. "I was just thinking of you and planning to invite you and your nephews and nieces over," she said when I asked if she could put us up for a night. I really don't know if Sonya had our massive "invasion" in mind all along, but wasn't it nice of her to put it so kindly?

As it happened, when my siblings heard about Sonya's, they, too wanted to be part of the party. When I texted Sonya that our group had swelled to 12, she texted back: "The more the merrier!"

* * *

SO it was that minutes after the evening prayers that Thursday, we boarded two vehicles for Tagaytay, arriving past 11 p.m., no thanks to the turtle-paced traffic until the Sucat intersection. The other vehicle reached Tagaytay before us but they took a wrong turn, winding up in a dark neighborhood. "You're lucky no one took a shot at you!" I scolded them.

Unlike before when Sonya's was in a secret location known only to devotees, there are now ample directions, by way of glow-in-the-dark road signs, to the place from the Aguinaldo Highway. But we found the gate locked and had to rouse Sonya from her sleep so she could tell one of her boys to let us in.

As I had imagined over and over in my mind throughout the trip, Sonya's Bed and Breakfast still took my breath away as we trudged down the stone path from the parking lot. Capiz lamps lit our way through the flower beds and walkways to the "Lavender" cottage, the biggest of the six cottages in the complex. Behind me, I could hear everyone oohing and aahing at the enchanting sight, especially when we entered the cottage and found it furnished with antiques and native crafts. When we said Sonya followed the "shabby chic" philosophy, Dada exclaimed, "No, it's just chic!"

* * *

THOUGH we had forced her to leave her comfortable bed in the middle of the night, Sonya was ever the gracious hostess, conjuring forth an impressive feast (for that time of the night) of crackers, tuna spread, cheeses, jamon Serrano, dalandan juice and red wine.

Before we urged her to go back to bed, Sonya showed us another cottage for two she had reserved for us. One look at the cosy quarters, especially the bed with an ornate headboard and crisp white linens and we immediately assigned it to Fani and Jonathan, who are technically still honeymooners, having gotten married just this June.

Because another cottage is under construction in the area, our breakfast the next morning couldn't be served beneath a tree in the garden, an experience I still savor today. Instead, it was served in the main dining area, off Sonya's pristine kitchens and laundry room, an operation using only organic soap and "woman" power of which Sonya is particularly proud.

Breakfast was a leisurely, laughter-filled affair, fueled by native chocolate, *bangus*, *adobo*, fried rice, mango and tomato salsa and the most heavenly mushroom omelette to ever cross our lips. We imposed some more on Sonya's hospitality and invited over our Tita Chul and Tita Ansing, who had also come up the night before, for breakfast. "Oh, but we've had breakfast already!" they protested as they arrived, but one whiff of Sonya's offerings and they promptly lost their resolve.

* * *

THE REST of the morning was spent roaming the gardens, beholding Sonya's handiwork, including rare plants like the one whose name is politely translated as "St. Peter's Balls," mainly because they look like green prickly balls but, when matured and opened, reveal a sight that can only be delicately described as resembling a woman's private parts!

Another rare specimen can be found in a corner of The Conservatory, the latest and largest addition to her famous garden restaurant. Known as the "Spider Plant," it boasts a huge flower the color of fire and resembling a tongue of fire, indeed a most intriguing sight. "I planted it two years ago and it's only now that it has blossomed!" Sonya enthused.

While the rest of us roamed the grounds, the others took advantage of the spa services that Sonya's offers, including body and foot massages, foot spas and manicures and pedicures performed by women in the community. We were all surprised when our aunts declared that they'd never had a foot spa ever, and when Fani offered to treat them to the procedure, they looked like they'd just found a new addiction.

A stay at Sonya's, which comes with dinner or lunch, an overnight stay and breakfast, costs P2,500 per person on weekdays and P2,800 on weekends and holidays, with package rates for groups of more than six. Not cheap, but then again, when was paradise ever a bargain?

Thank you, Sonya, from the bottom of our hearts.

That Manila galleon

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

WE tend to denigrate whatever pertains to our colonial past. Instead of selecting the best that was handed down to us and claiming it as an integral part of our being, we debase and downgrade it as something to be ashamed of.

The self-flagellation does little for our self-esteem or others' opinion of us. Nobody really cares what, if any, other country is responsible for what we are right now. But this self-defeating attitude has resulted in our incapacity to love ourselves, to be proud of our customs and traditions, to stand up for our rights, and there lies the rub. If we accept that we are the sum of our parts, then by rejecting our particular heritage we cripple the whole and weaken ourselves.

Miguel Angel Hernandez, author of "The China Galleon," claims that Mexico was the "axis mundi between the East and the West." We, on the other hand, aver that we had nothing to do with the Galleon Trade, that it was purely a Spanish deal. Yet, its success was due to the fact that Manila was the entrepôt of this trade, the gateway to the Orient if you prefer (not Portuguese Moluccas, not Dutch Indonesia, not British Malaysia). Here the galleons were constructed and the goods were first assembled that initiated the introduction of the riches of the Orient to both the new and the old world. While Hernandez calls it "the China galleon," those ships were built in Philippine shipyards with Philippine hardwood and by the labor and sacrifice of Filipinos. That being the case, by all means those ships should be called the Manila galleon.

Hernandez further states that the Galleon Trade "was organized and financed from its inception by sailors, capitalists and authorities settled in New Spain." We must be reading different books and documents. From what I know, it was the religious orders in the Philippines, using funds from the Obras Pias, who either lent out money to investors or bought the goods themselves. Now it is true that the merchandise from different countries in Asia was brought to Mexico and sold there, but they originated from the Philippines. Further, that first galleon was ostensibly the brain child of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi who saw the Filipinos along the banks of the Pasig trading with the Chinese and sent the first galleon off to the new world.

The Galleon Trade gave rise to the Chinese settlements (specifically Binondo and Sta. Cruz) in the country and the birth of the Chinese *mestizos*, whether half-Malay or half-European, so that today there are few of us without Chinese blood. And it is from this group of people where the Rizals, Lunas, Paternos, Lopez Jaenas, and the other sons of Gomburza sprung from. What I'm saying is we have a choice: we can choose to look at the historical glass as half-empty or half-full—it's up to us.

Having said that, let me continue. Magellan was followed by friar Juan Francisco Garcia Jofre de Loaisa who was ordered by the Spanish monarch to continue the exploration of the Philippines. Among the crew members was Andres de Urdaneta who as yet had not entered the Augustinian order. The expedition was a failure, but the king wanted to know the fate of some members of Magellan's and Loaisa's crew who had been left behind.

Hernan Cortes, following orders, sent Alvaro Saavedra Ceron in charge of three ships manned by more than a hundred men and outfitted with 30 cannons. They left on Oct. 31, 1527, but as soon as they were out of port, a strong wind sank two of the three ships.

Mindanao was sighted on Feb. 1, 1528 and on Feb. 23 they sailed along the coast of that island where the natives invited them to disembark. Wishing to replenish their diminished stock, the crew established good relations with the inhabitants and were surprised to discover that the locals knew some Spanish words. The king was called Katunao and together with his son-in-law boarded the ship for some entertainment. Upon setting off, the crew was presented with Sebastian de Puerta, a survivor of the Loaisa expedition who had been kept as a slave. It would be interesting to us now if the man had left some record of his passage here.

Bad weather was encountered by the crew along the southern part of Mindanao and they disembarked to look for food. A crowd of some 50 people were amazed when Sebastian de Puerta explained their mission in their own dialect.

Upon reaching Sarangani, Puerta again explained to the people that they came in search of food. They discovered two other Spaniards, Romay and Sanchez, also survivors of Loaisa's journey. Again there appears to be no record of their passage, although someday a researcher may chance upon them in the voluminous documents held by Mexican archives.

On Nov. 1, 1542, another expedition under Ruy Lopez de Villalobos left the port of Navidad. The only claim to fame of this group was their decision to confer the name Felipina on the island of Leyte in honor of Philip, prince of Asturias. Eventually the name came to mean all the 7,000 visible and invisible islands as the case may be. At the time we were still known as the "Islands of San Lazaro." The other noteworthy event was Villalobos' death, while being attended to by St. Francis Xavier.

(*Notes from Miguel Hernandez, "The China Galleon."*)

Three lessons

YOUNG BLOOD

Sandra Therese Ramos

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

A STUDENT in a Kumon center couldn't believe it when I told her I was still studying in the university. She asked me why I was teaching there if I was still studying.

But yes, that's the truth. I study and teach at the same time.

A lot of people have asked me why. Why do I spend so much time teaching kids when I can go out with my friends, or just bum around, see movies and even go shopping? Why do I work when my parents can still support me and give me the things I need and want?

It was my sister who first started teaching at the Kumon center as a summer job. When the school year opened, she could no longer go there, so I took her place, going there once a week. I teach math and reading skills. I basically assist the kids with their reading or improve their math skills with the help of flashcards.

When I first decided to teach, my primary reason was to earn some money to augment my allowance. As the months passed, the money became less and less important. I was actually enjoying what I was doing.

Teaching the kids is a very great experience for me. And I learned three things while having the time of my life.

The first is passion. Teaching has reaffirmed my belief that passion is very important in any kind of work. We just can't do anything without passion because, as someone said, then the fruits will not be as sweet. We have to love what we do. It is what keeps us going in our work and, inevitably, it is what makes us happy.

That is the reason I admire artists so much: they are full of passion. In this country, artists are not really encouraged to pursue their art because people say there's no money in it. But because they have so much passion, they feel so free and happy. Money is not an issue for them. Happiness is.

I never really knew that I had so much passion for teaching until recently when I met one of my mentors in the university. She invited me to help organize a certain project. I told her I couldn't possibly handle it because the meetings were set on Saturdays, the day I teach in Kumon now that there are regular classes.

She told me, "Wow, so you're still gonna teach?"

"Yeah, I love it!" I replied. And she then asked why I didn't take education instead of management. But that is another story.

Love is the keyword in every line of work.

Happiness is everything. This is the second lesson I learned. Besides being passionate about what we do, we also have to be happy doing it. Not many people like routine, but if they are happy with their work, they can live with it.

I remember Eddie, one of the characters in the book, "The Five People You Meet in Heaven." He worked in an amusement park all his life and he wasn't happy with his work. It was not what he really wanted to do. So all his life, he regretted working there. He felt like he had wasted his life.

Is this what we want, to feel that we just wasted our time here on earth because we didn't do what makes us happy?

Just this summer, my sister went to the United States with my mom to apply for admission to a nursing school in New York. She didn't really know what she wanted to do with her life and she went there to try to see if it was going to work. She passed the test, did well with the interviews, and qualified for a scholarship. But in the end, she decided to come back home because she felt that she was not going to be happy being a nurse. She realized that even if she would earn a lot of money, it was not going to make her happy.

That is how important happiness is in life. It can break or make a life.

The third lesson I learned from teaching is, don't threaten kids. It just won't work.

Children are at a stage when their minds are just developing, so it is very important that we teach them the right things. Threatening them is the worst way to teach them their lessons.

One day I had to teach one of the naughtiest kids in the center. He wouldn't sit on his chair even for a minute. He liked to run around and go under the tables and chairs. I guess I just had enough, and I told him that he could just go home if he didn't want to do his worksheets.

He went down to work and finally finished his worksheets. I was so happy to be done with him.

As I was checking some worksheets, he came up to me with a book and asked if I could read it to him. I did as he asked, but when we were finished, he grabbed some more books and asked me to read them, too.

As I was reading the books, I felt ashamed. I was asking myself why I had threatened this kid. He was so innocent and he didn't really know what he was doing. He was just probably having the time of his life playing and it was very embarrassing for me to realize that I didn't understand that. My heart melted.

Reading those books while he listened attentively is now one very beautiful memory that I treasure. As I was leaving, another teacher told me that what just happened was a very beautiful moment. She said that if she had a camera, she would have taken our picture because, like the ad said, it was a "Kodak moment."

Although Kumon is taught in a setting different from a classroom, I still feel like I'm a teacher. In some way, I still feel the gratifying feeling other teachers get when their students do well in class. I always feel proud when I see kids able to read on their own and solve problems on their own.

So I guess I will be teaching there until I graduate. The kids in Kumon just take my breath away. They are truly gifts from heaven. They give me so much happiness that I always look forward to going there even if it's hard to wake up in the morning and to balance my classes and my study time. At the end of the day, they always leave me with a bigger heart.

No wonder my mom didn't want us to ever grow up! Teaching is a very fulfilling job.

Sandra Therese Ramos, 20, is a third year management student at the University of Asia and the Pacific.

THEY SAID

Vulture

"The (President Gloria Macapagal) Arroyo administration is like a vulture preying on an already prostrate nation."

—Bagong Alyansang Makabayan spokesperson Renato Reyes, criticizing the new taxes being planned

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Violation of human rights

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OUR police force should be made to study the Constitution and other laws regarding human rights and due respect for every human being.

Yesterday, while I was outside Jollibee Mendiola, a jeep full of women and children, numbering around 30, who (I learned later) belonged to farming families, arrived to stage a picket. While they were still having a dialogue with a policewoman, a policeman went to their jeep, snatched the keys of the vehicle and went inside the police detachment in Mendiola. When the women went after the police, the policemen locked the doors of the detachment, while three of them posted themselves outside, telling the women that they deserved what they were getting for being "noisy." Without provocation, one policeman even shouted profanities at the women. When the women argued that they weren't doing anything wrong, the policemen retorted that the police have the right to do anything they want.

This incident made me feel unsafe in my own country.

I am a law student. We have a Constitution which is supposed to be the supreme law of the land. We have a Bill of Rights which enumerates the basic rights of people, among which are the freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. In that incident, I felt ashamed to be a Filipino. Imagine, the people tasked to protect the rights of our citizens are the very same ones who violate them. This is how dirty our police force is.

—TONETTE SAMSON, tonette_ms@yahoo.com

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Wrong attributions

MAY we point out a most damaging, completely false report titled "Angelo captors are no ordinary extremists," which was published in the INQUIRER's July 15 issue.

The front-page article, wittingly or unwittingly, demeaned my person and character in the eyes of our countrymen, the present administration and the world at large, the Muslim world in particular.

I did not make any of the statements attributed to me in that article. I did not have an interview with INQUIRER reporter .Nash Maulana. And I never made those statements before any reporter or anybody.

No man in his right mind will hesitate to help his government negotiate for the life of a countryman if asked to. I did my best. I was certainly prepared to be sent to Iraq if that had been called for.

Could you imagine how foolish it would be for a Filipino Muslim leader to plead, in the name of Islam and Islamic brotherhood, with the captors of Angelo de la Cruz for his release and in another breath, condemn them as "no ordinary extremists," "insurgents," a threat to non-Muslims and Muslims alike, etc.?

De la Cruz has been released, God be praised! But I am now hostage to the lies woven around me in the news report which projected me as insincere in my efforts to help, irreverent of Islamic brotherhood, fanatically judgmental on matters that I have no full and authoritative knowledge of, and irresponsible as any self-serving media man.

I ask, in the spirit of the INQUIRER slogan, "Balanced news, fearless views," that the damage caused on my reputation be repaired in the most just and fair manner. Then, I may yet regain my stature before the Muslim world and be able to help our non-Muslim Filipino brothers and sisters, as well as our national government, in promoting and sustaining good relations with the Muslims, if and when my contribution as a Muslim becomes necessary.

—DR. MAHID M. MUTILAN, vice governor, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Cotabato City

IF Vice Gov. Mahid Mutilan remembers, on July 15 at his office, I explained to him the inadvertent mix-up of the attributions.

The backgrounder on Khalid ibn al-Walid was not sourced from Governor Mutilan. It was based on historical accounts.

—NASH B. MAULANA, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Issues over personalities

THIS is to respectfully protest the INQUIRER's treatment of the story "Miriam switch irks militants." (PDI, 7/27/04)

The story was purportedly based on a press release coming from an NGO criticizing Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago for severing her ties from the K-4 coalition and declaring herself an independent senator. Surely, the principles of journalism do not justify placing a story of pure personal attack on the front page. I respectfully submit that it was unethical conduct on the part of the editor to place a press release of that nature on the front page, rather than in a more appropriate section, such as, Letters to the Editor.

Therefore, we respectfully request that in addition to any measures you might want to take, this protest should also be, if possible, referred to the INQUIRER ombudsman.

In a prior story, Senator Santiago told your reporter Jerry Esplanada that she "was likely to become an independent senator." That is perfectly consistent with the senator's public career so far. She has always ran as a candidate for her own political party, the People's Reform Party. When she ran for president in 1992, she was a PRP candidate (and thus, considered an independent). When she ran for senator in 2001 in the Estrada ticket, she did so as a guest candidate. When she ran for senator in the Arroyo ticket in 2004, again she did so as a guest candidate. In both cases, as a guest candidate, she tried to support the coalition under which she ran, until her personal convictions impelled her to take an independent stand.

That Santiago did not vote for the administration candidate for Senate president is simply one more illustration of the senator's well-known independence of mind. She was, as she announced, merely trying to raise the point that 12 newly elected senators should be consulted before Senate officers are allowed to keep their old posts in the previous Congress. The press release that was placed on the INQUIRER 's front page was clearly critical of the senator's personality. Journalism graduates, like myself, are taught that in any public debate, it is issues that matter, and that attacks on personalities are unethical.

—MIGNONETTE C. ALDAY, head, media bureau, Office of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

Great Filipino composers and artists on radio

THE AGENCE France Press news story about radio station dzFE (PDI, 7/26/04) failed to mention that dzFE is the only radio station in the entire country that has a program exclusively devoted to the works and performances of Filipino composers and artists. That program is "Bravo Filipino," heard every Saturday from 6-7 p.m., hosted by Bert Robledo.

Through this program, one hears performances of Filipino artists who have made good here and abroad. These are the likes of tenor Abdul Candao, soprano Rachelle Gerodias, child piano prodigy Ina Montesclaros, child violin prodigy Junior Salarza and others. One time, Robledo featured a recording by the late National Artist Atang de la Rama. And in one of his future programs, he will feature another National Artist—the late Jovita Fuentes.

Robledo, who incidentally is a good friend and a fellow aficionado of Filipino music, gets his materials from dzFE's recordings of concerts and performances of Filipino artists and from collectors of old records.

—JOSE A. OLIVEROS, 52 Kamagong St., Pilar Village, Las Piñas City

Support for Doyo and the environment

WE support the article of Ceres Doyo titled "How green is the Sona?" (PDI, 7/22/04)

I strongly agree with lawyer Antonio Oposa when he said that "environmental security is in fact the highest form of security and he or she who does not understand this has neither right nor reason to aspire for or hold public office.

Good luck to Mr. Oposa.

—MA. ROWENA N. TILOS, Springville Garden 2, Molino, Bacoor, Cavite

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Ilocos folk hail slain broadcaster as hero

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—Ilocanos have hailed slain broadcaster Roger Mariano as a hero and a marker in his honor is being planned to rise at the site where he was felled by assassins' bullets.

Mariano earned commendations separately from the Ilocos Norte provincial board and the Laoag City council for "advancing the crusade against corruption."

Mariano, the latest of the growing number of journalists felled in the performance of their duties, was killed along a dark and isolated section of a village in San Nicolas town while driving home last Saturday night.

He took at least 10 bullet wounds in the body and the head.

Farewell program

Gunmen staged the ambush shortly after Mariano ended what turned out to be his farewell program in his nightly "Roger Mariano in Action" on dzJC-Aksyon Radyo.

San Nicolas Mayor Alfredo Valdez told Lolita Reyes, a dzJC commentator, that he would personally look into the building of a marker right at the site where Mariano was killed.

"This is to heed public clamor that appropriate honors be given to Mariano for his crusade against corruption and for upholding press freedom," Valdez said.

Reyes temporarily took over Mariano's time slot while the station was reorganizing its program schedules.

According to Temmy Simeon, another dzJC commentator, rerunning Mariano's last few programs is being planned.

Media outlets here have separately unfurled banners asking justice for Mariano as they called the police to arrest his assassins and not reduce his death to a mere body count.

International attention

His death has caught the attention of the New York-based Committee for the Protection of Journalists which called for an investigation of his murder.

Ann Cooper of the CPJ called up several community journalists here and asked how the police were handling the investigation.

Cooper said they wanted to establish whether or not Mariano's killing was in line with his broadcast work.

In separate resolutions, the city council and provincial board condemned Mariano's murder and urged authorities to track down his killers immediately.

"Mariano's murder was an assault against press freedom. Democracy is in peril if the press is under threat," Councilor Melvin de la Cuesta said.

De la Cuesta, also a media practitioner, said Mariano's death was in line with his journalistic work. Quoting reports, De la Cuesta noted that Mariano was in possession of "hot documents" moments before he got killed.

The Kapisanan ng mga Brodkasters sa Pilipinas-national chapter has put up a P1 million reward to informants who can lead to the capture of Mariano's gunmen.

The reward came from a fund allocated by President Macapagal-Arroyo for victims of violence against media practitioners.

UNSOLVED JOURNALISTS' MURDERS

Iloilo media men rally vs killings

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Journalists in Iloilo yesterday wore black shirts and armbands to condemn the recent killing of two broadcasters in Luzon.

The journalists led by the Iloilo chapter of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines (NUJP) were set to gather in front of the old Iloilo provincial capitol yesterday evening to light candles to protest the killing of Arnel Manalo and Roger Mariano.

Manalo, a correspondent of radio station dzRH and the tabloid Bulgar, was shot dead on Thursday morning in Bauan town, Batangas City.

He was the second journalist killed in just five days after Mariano of dzJC-Aksyon Radio was gunned down on Aug. 1 in Ilocos Norte.

Manalo and Mariano were the 10th and 11th Filipino journalists murdered since 2003 and the 53rd and 54th since the restoration of democracy in 1986, according to data of the NUJP. None of the murders has been solved.

List of names

The murdered journalists include Iloilo broadcasters Eddie Suede, Severino Arcones, newspaper editor Josef Aldeguer Nava and trainee broadcast reporter Noel Teneso.

"How can we effectively perform our duty to uphold the people's right to know when our colleagues are being killed and their killers remain free? We condemn the killings and demand the immediate apprehension of the culprits," according to a statement of NUJP-Iloilo.

Sen. Manuel Villar, incoming Senate committee chair on public order and illegal drugs, urged law enforcers to apprehend the killers.

He said police officials should be held accountable of the cases that remain unsolved.

"The law is already there and they (police) should implement it," Villar told a news conference.

In Manila, the NUJP demanded an investigation of the killings.

Former broadcaster

It challenged Vice President Noli de Castro, a former broadcaster, both chambers of Congress, and local and international advocates of press freedom to join the investigation.

"The deaths of Manalo and Mariano, both broadcasters, should challenge Vice President Noli de Castro—who rode on the crest of his popularity as a broadcast journalist—into working for the swift resolution of the murders of his colleagues and ensuring that killers are brought to justice. More than any other individual in power, Vice President De Castro is in the best position to do something about these killings," said Carlos Conde, NUJP national secretary general.

Conde raised alarm over the spate of killings of journalists in the country. "If the trend continues this year, we may see the country breaking its infamous record of being tied with Colombia as the world's most dangerous place for journalists."

He said any investigation of the killings should also look into working conditions in the Philippine media.

"The NUJP believes that there can be no genuine press freedom if journalists continue to work under conditions of fear, poverty and corruption," said Conde.

DPWH seeks use of less expensive road

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Department of Public Works and Highways in Central Luzon urged the national government to release at least P1.19 billion for the rehabilitation of the Manila North Road (MNR) as an alternative route to the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

The DPWH issued the appeal as it expected motorists to avoid using NLEX due to the 700-percent increase in toll rates along the 86-km highway in December.

"The expected (increase) in toll rates along the NLEX, once improvement works are completed, will pave the way for an increased utilization of the parallel MNR," said Ramon Aquino, DPWH regional director.

"While many Filipinos are willing to pay more for their comfort, through the use of the upgraded NLEX, a greater percentage of the traveling public may not afford the considerably higher toll and will instead look for a better and free alternative route," he said.

The Lopez family-owned Manila North Tollway Corp. (MNTC) has been rehabilitating the NLEX.

Aquino said the MNR, more known as the old MacArthur Highway, is an alternative road to the NLEX.

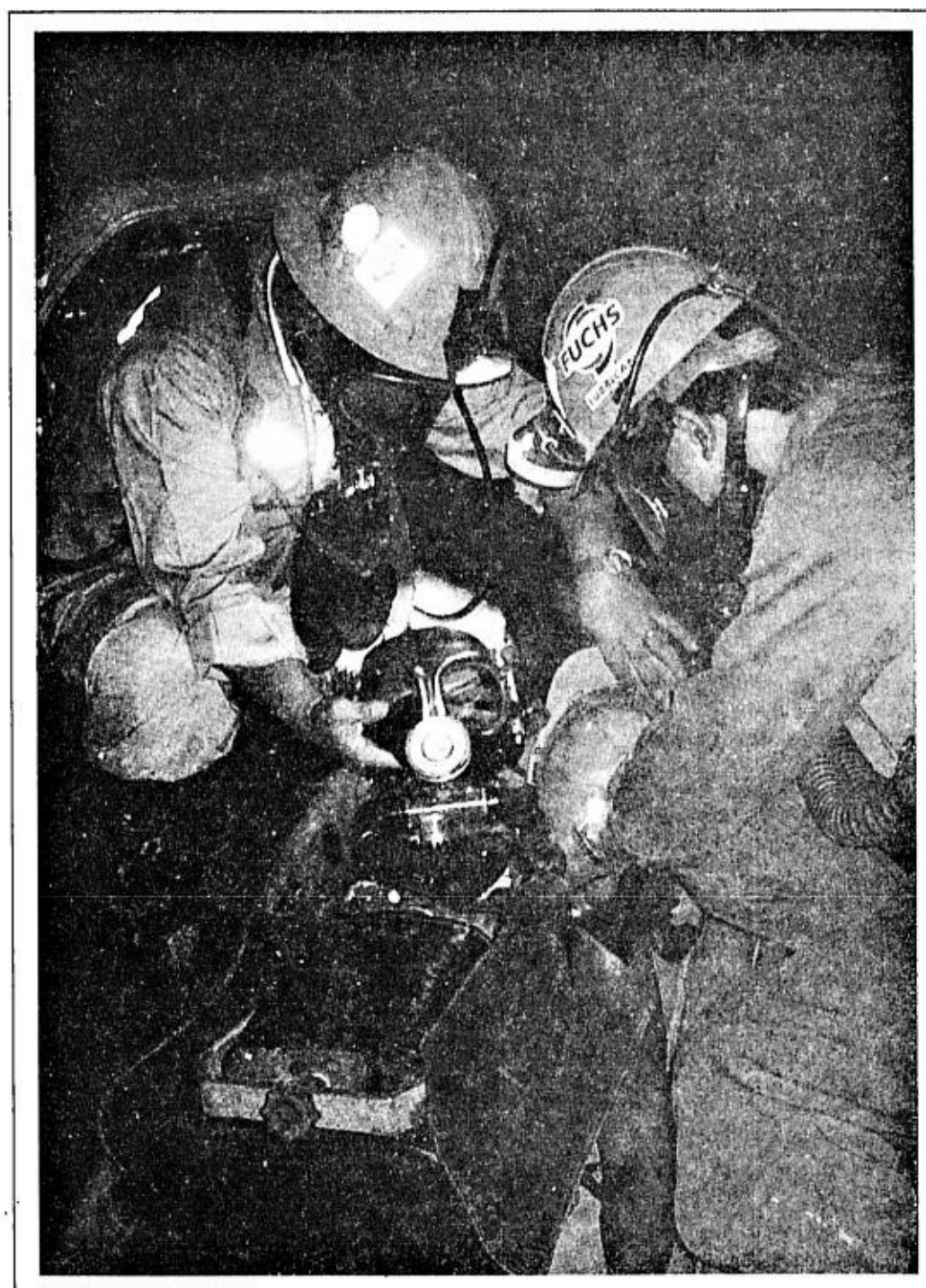
The DPWH wants to focus rehabilitation work along the MNR's Meycauayan (Bulacan)-Sta. Ines (Mabalacat, Pampanga) stretch. The route covers more than 80 km.

"The limited capacity of the MNR is already in need of upgrading and widening. And this need will even be amplified once the (new toll rates for) NLEX is in place," Aquino said.

MNTC president Jose de Jesus said his company, when it assumes the management of the NLEX in December, estimated the toll fee to start at P2.49 for every kilometer.

The fees are expected to go higher, depending on the foreign exchange rate and inflation level that are the "biggest drivers" in determining the cost of the toll fees, De Jesus said in a telephone interview.

He clarified that the toll adjustment was also based on the original project cost of P11.7 billion. Delays, financing costs and other factors pushed the project cost to P18 billion, he said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



PREPAREDNESS LOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Members of the search and rescue team of the Philex Mining Corp., the oldest in Northern Luzon, simulate a disaster rescue in Baguio City.

21 killed in clashes with NPA

GUNBATTLES between government forces and communist rebels killed at least 21 people in the deadliest fighting to hit the country in months, officials said Friday.

Troops overran a major communist New People's Army camp in southern Agusan del Norte Thursday, killing at least 12 rebels and five soldiers, the military said. Thirteen troops were wounded.

On Friday, a police patrol encountered a number of guerrillas in Zambales province northwest of Manila, sparking battles in two villages that left two guerrillas and two police dead, provincial police chief Senior Superintendent Wilson Victorio said.

Four other officers were wounded, he said, and the rebels escaped with police and soldiers in pursuit.

The camp captured Thursday by troops from the army's 4th Infantry Division in the village of Guinbasan was used as a launching pad for rebel operations in the area, about 770 kilometers southeast of Manila, a military report said.

It said the rebels were preparing a raid on the nearby municipality of Nasipit when two platoons attacked. The report did not say how many guerrillas were at the camp at the time.

The government and the rebels have opened talks to end the 35-year-old communist insurgency, but have not agreed on a ceasefire, resulting in sporadic clashes around the country. *AP*

Close Boracay dump, team of geologists says

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Geologists have recommended the closure of the garbage dump on Boracay Island, Aklan to prevent the possible contamination of ground and coastal waters of the world-famous island-resort.

In a report entitled "Geological Site Investigation of the Solid Waste Disposal Site on Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan," experts of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Western Visayas recommended that the local government provide an alternative dump outside the island.

Aside from the closure of the dump, the geologists recommended that a retaining wall be installed on the site to prevent garbage from sliding down to the coastal area and to institute measures that would stop its leakage to the groundwater.

The recommendations were part of the summary report prepared by senior science research specialist Eduardo Claridad and senior geologist Darius Dagñalan who conducted a field investigation of the dump on July 14.

MGB regional director Leo Van Juguan sent a copy of the report to Albert Magalang, executive director of the National Solid Waste Management Commission.

The report was among the proposals that would be presented to Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun who was scheduled to hold a meeting in Boracay on Wednesday with the island's residents, resort owners and government officials to help formulate a solid waste management plan for the island.

The dump is located 200 meters from the coastline in the northern tip of the island where many of the high-end resorts are located.

Around 6,000 tons of garbage are dumped in the site daily. The volume is increasing because of growing tourist arrivals in the past few years. Last year, 339,434 tourists visited the island, 84,747 of whom were foreigners.

In their report, the geologists said the dump was susceptible to seepage and leakage because the limestone surrounding the site has cracks and holes.

Seepage from the garbage could also permeate ground water and bring contamination.

The geologists said in their report that rain and ground tremors could also force solid wastes at the slope of the dump to slide down to the coastal area occupied by the Fairways and Bluewaters Resort of the Fil-Estate Corp.

Epileptic girl saved from own ma's abuses

GUIGUINTO, Bulacan—Police and social workers here yesterday rescued a 14-year-old epileptic girl from her mother who has been abusing her for more than a year now.

The girl, a resident of Barangay Pulong Gubat, was taken to the Bethany Orphanage Center here while police took her 34-year-old mother for examination at the Philippine General Hospital.

A neighbor of the victim's family finally sought the assistance of the police and a television news crew, saying she could no longer bear seeing the mother tie her daughter and burn her arms and other parts of the body with a flat iron.

Social workers said the girl has several burns and bruises as a result of the abuse.

Police said the mother often tied her daughter inside their house to prevent her from going out. Reports said the mother, a laundry woman, was worried that something wrong would happen to her daughter once she experienced seizure.

The mother, a widow with eight children, is often out of their house as she washes clothes for her neighbors.

Police said they could not charge and jail the mother because she has a newborn to care for and feed.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Customs exec sues cops for shakedown on importers

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Customs District Collector Lourdes Mangaoang sued the chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Northern Mindanao and four other lawmen before the Ombudsman for allegedly harassing legitimate importers through the conduct of "unauthorized" anti-smuggling operations.

Mangaoang said she fears that such illegal actions could drive investors away from the region.

"Law enforcers like them should learn their lessons, they should know the limits of their duties when it comes to anti-smuggling operations because they could be driving away investors who contributed to the customs' success in earning beyond its targeted collection last year," Mangaoang told the INQUIRER.

Collection

Last year, the BOC Northern Mindanao collected about P1.2 billion in tariffs and other fees.

Mangaoang said their goal to collect more from importers was being endangered when CIDG-10 chief Senior Supt. Raul Boac ordered his four staffers, Insp. Ramon Gulong, SPO2 Ceasar Beltran, SPO2 Rogelio Basadre and SPO1 Benjamin Alfonso, to conduct anti-smuggling operations.

Boac has denied his group has acted illegally in the pursuit of the anti-smuggling law.

But Mangaoang said the policemen have been conducting illegal operations.

She said in all the operations, the policemen had targetted legitimate importers.

Mangaoang said she has been warning Boac but the official was not listening.

Surplus parts

She said last week, the policemen, led by Gulong intercepted and seized three container vans consigned to Japan Trak Surplus here.

The vans contained surplus car spare parts.

Boac denied that his group acted in bad faith.

"I don't think we have done something wrong. I only ordered the vans checked and we have checked only one of the three containers in the presence of some customs personnel. If we did it alone, we could have committed irregularities but the customs was there," he told the INQUIRER.

He declined to further comment on Mangaoang's charges saying he has yet to receive a copy of the complaint sheet.

Authorities have been cracking down on smuggling in the country, especially of agricultural products like rice and sugar.

Recently, Navy personnel seized sugar shipments in Batangas suspected of being smuggled.

In previous cases, several shipments of rice were also suspected of being smuggled especially from Vietnam and Thailand.

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INQUIRER Visayas

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Discovering San Joaquin's beauty

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
San Joaquin, Iloilo

SAN JOAQUIN, 53 km from Iloilo City, had been a well-kept secret among scuba divers and spear fishers for many years. It was only recently that picnickers and day-tourists started to notice what the town offered—good beaches, places of interests, fresh seafood, summer fruits and enduring traditions.

The municipal government has started planning to make tourism not a hodgepodge experience but a sustainable industry. .Officials believed that tourism should try to help communities by spurring jobs and training people to acquire certain skills, as well as take care of the environment.

The centerpiece of hometown tourism in San Joaquin is its traditions and customs, which have been handed down for generations. Scholars and historians may scoff at their authenticity but they dwell in the collective consciousness of the residents, although they may have happened long, long time ago. The modern versions may have been embellished and stilted by influences from Catholic Church, Hollywood and other tales but they have served to unite communities and people.

San Joaquin offers community-based eco-tourism, where villagers show visitors around places of interests, make their stay comfortable, and entertain them with songs, rituals, dances and food. Last summer, a group of journalists joined tourism officials and development consultants to sample the best of the community tourism.

Welcome rites

The fun started in Barangay Pagang. The visitors were given *bulos* (hats made from coconut leaves), and asked to ride a decorated *carosa* —a throwback to the time when beast-drawn carts were the mode of transport in the rural areas.

The *carosa* stopped in front of an open-sided bamboo hut beside the beach. The visitors were given coconut juice and asked to join the welcome ritual.

Two "*maaram*" or shamans, of which San Joaquin is famous for, initiated the ritual. A "*maaram*" is a healer, ritual leader, diviner and community leader said to be imbued with supernatural powers from spirit guides.

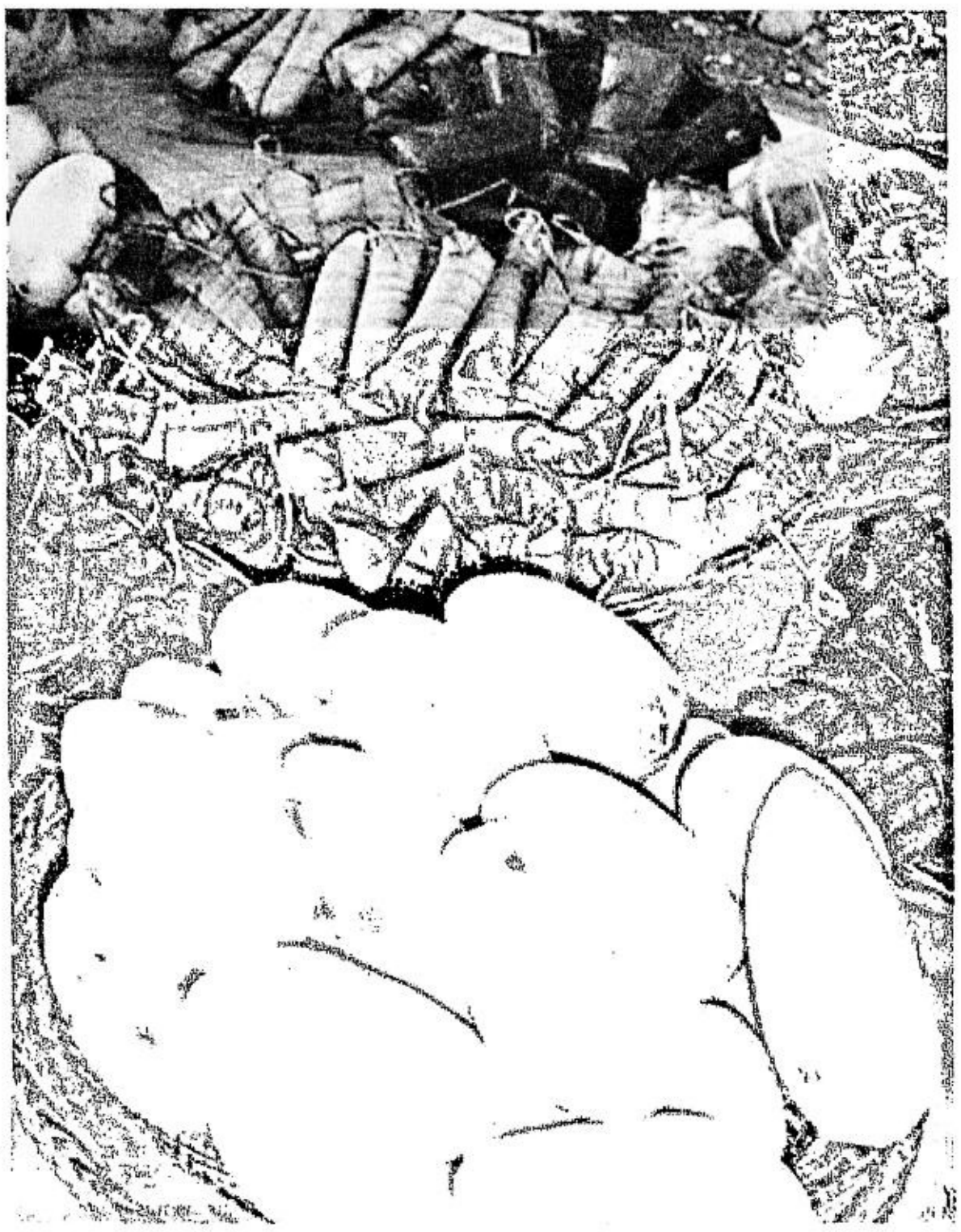
Virgilio Ablero and Lamberto Sarayno chanted prayers and lighted incense to ward off malevolent spirits that may harm visitors with weak *dungan*, roughly translated in English as soul or psyche. Such fortification is needed for a stranger who is not familiar to the local spirits. Thus, instead of a corsage or lei, the visitors were given a small piece of ginger wrapped in red cloth.

Ablero's chant asked for good health and safe passage, while Sarayno chanted something in pidgin Latin, but it sounded like names of the islands between Antique and Palawan, probably the places he had visited.

Breakfast by the beach was a spread of *suman sa ibus* (steamed sticky rice and bits of ginger wrapped in coconut leaf), native chocolate, mangoes, *bukayo* (young coconut cooked in brown sugar) and *kalamay hati* (sweet gooey rice pudding). Baskets of *camachile* "*kamonsil*" were also given away.

The hut by the beach, with a clean restroom, offers a relaxing view of the sea where coral reefs are being protected. The coastal waters of Pagang are part of the protected area marked by the municipal government. Fishing is not allowed as the corals are being rehabilitated.

Pagang is a typical fishing village. The families are poor and cannot depend on the sea to survive. Fishing by hook and line are allowed, but not nets that tangle with corals and scrape the sea bottom.



MANGO and *suman* for breakfast

MA. DIOSA LABISTE

The women become roadside fruit vendors selling "*kamonsil*," "*siniguelas*," "*duhat*," "*chico*" and mangoes. They also weave *buri* and fruit baskets made from coconut midribs, said Erlinda Segubre, who demonstrated the craft.

If the sea is calm and the weather is fine, visitors may take a *parao*, a wind-driven sailboat, to Talisayan Point. If the sea is rough, a tricycle ride to the San Joaquin Church is just fine.

San Joaquin Church

The church is one of the local tourist attractions. Built of limestone blocks carved from the mountains of the town, it has a pediment that celebrates the victory of Spanish soldiers over Morrocan forces at the Battle of Tetuan in North Africa. But the artist transposed the battle scene to the local setting by adding tropical vegetation and animals. Even Spanish soldiers have native than Castilian features; the foot soldiers looked more like Filipinos than Spaniards.

The church was built in 1869 by Fr. Tomas Santaren, the town's Spanish priest, who was also its master architect. Santaren was assisted by a Spanish engineer, Don Felipe Diez.

Skilled masons, famous sculptors, painters and craftsmen from Spain and Mexico were employed to translate Santaren's ideas into lines, arches and pillars, columns, frescoes and paintings, according to Henry Funtecha and Melanie Padilla in their book, "Historical Landmarks and Monuments in Iloilo."

But behind the impressive work is the suffering of the builders who were conscripted to work by cutting and hauling the limestone blocks, Funtecha and Padilla said. Each village had a quota of limestone block, lime, sand, gravel and lumber. Those who failed to meet the quota were flogged, while village leaders who could not source the blocks had to buy them from stonecutters.

Even women and children were not spared from the back-breaking work. They were taken to the construction site and helped the men by hauling sand and gravel from the beach. Unlike the men who were paid in cash, the women and children were given needles, threads and other household items as payment. Some 5,000 people worked to build the church.

When it was finished, the church became a sanctuary for the townsfolk. It served as gathering place for women and children during attacks of pirates. It was also an evacuation center during World War II.

But on Jan. 29, 1934, Ilonggo guerrilla leader, Col. Macario Peralta, ordered the burning of the church and all the houses in the poblacion. The church was reduced to an ugly pile of charred ruins; its magnificent pediment was covered with soot.

Five years later, a powerful earthquake hit Panay Island, toppling the tower of the San Joaquin Church.

In 1974, the national government declared the church a historical landmark.. Reconstruction and restoration work started in 1982 with funds coming from the National Historical Institute.

Punta Malagting

From the church, the visitors were taken to Punta Malagting where LSDC Resort is located. They were encouraged to take the ride on hammocks from the road up to the reception desk.

After a welcome drink, students dramatized the story of Malays from Borneo coming to the shores of San Joaquin. A drama on the rituals of mourning followed.

The terraced resort overlooks a dive site, one of the bests in San Joaquin. The food was a native fare of broiled fish, chicken *adobo*, green mangoes and *bagoong*. Ripe mangoes and sweetened bananas were the dessert items.

The afternoon was meant for siesta or watching Elena Sibuan, 53, weave a bag from dried *buri* leaves. A grandmother of six, Sibuan learned basket and bag weaving when she was a little girl. Her mother wove *patadyong* cloth.

Sibuan earns P5 for every basket—as big as a purse—she had woven. The tiny bags are meant to hold souvenir items. It takes her an hour to make a bag, something that people in the city would not even think of doing. "It's better than doing nothing at all, or visiting the neighbors for *tsismis* (gossip)," said Sibuan.

Community pride

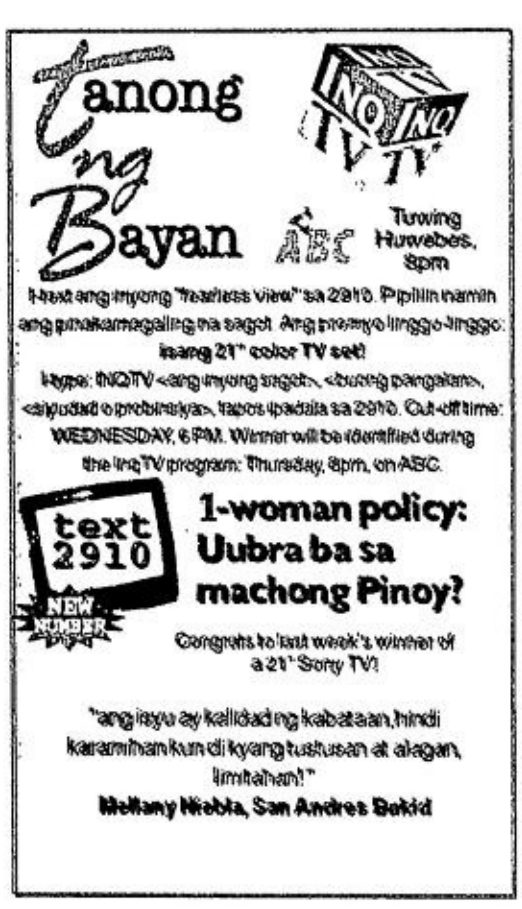
San Joaquin's community-based tourism not only instills pride among the locals but also make them think of possibilities to earn a living.

They could be tour guides, souvenir vendors or sellers, or caretakers of the environment and places of interest to tourists, said Doreen Cortez, a teacher from the University of the Philippines Visayas, who was the coach of the community-based tourism program assisted by the Philippines-Canada Local Government Support Program.

Tourism need not be capital-intensive, meaning no flashy hotels and air-conditioned accommodations. It could be home stay where the visitors could stay and learn about how the people in the community live their lives.

It could supplement income from farm or fishing during off-season, said Cortez. Farmers could hitch their carabaos and cows to a cart while fishers could take people to snorkeling sites.

The possibilities are endless and San Joaquin readies itself for more visitors this year.



President to revive Bataan nuclear plant

From page A1

ergy savings and independence," she added.

Power crisis

Ms Arroyo, whose government is facing the threat of a power crisis during her new six-year term, wants to reduce the country's dependence on oil imports from 48 percent of domestic consumption to 40 percent by 2010.

Announcing her 5-point energy independence agenda, Ms Arroyo endorsed the conversion of inactive power plants—the 850-MW Sucat, the 620-MW Limay, the 650-MW Malaya and the Bataan nuclear plant—into gas-fired plants in 2005 "to ensure that additional capacity will be in place in Luzon by 2008 and certainly by the time I step down in 2010."

It is in 2008 when a capacity shortfall is projected to take place.

$600-M cost

She did not reveal how much would be spent to convert the 620-MW Bataan plant into a gas-fired project.

Kepco Philippines Corp., which operates the 1,200-MW Iljian power plant, estimated that converting the mothballed nuclear plant would cost over $600 million—or enough to build a new power plant.

Aside from fuel conversion, the government must also contend with the cost of laying down a pipeline—$1 million per kilometer—for the flow of the Malampaya natural gas from its onshore gas processing plant in Tabangao, Batangas.

Natural gas for buses

Conversion to natural gas-fired facilities would allow the revival of the idled BNPP and the prolonged use of the Sucat (Parañaque) oil-fired generator, which is already set for decommissioning.

These National Power Corp.'s (Napocor) plants, along with the oil-fired Limay (Bataan) plant, have been eyed for conversion to maximize the utilization of Malampaya's resource produce.

Ms Arroyo also endorsed the use of natural gas for public buses, which she expected would start plying the Metro Manila to Laguna routes by next year. She expects 60 percent of the 1,500 buses in the metropolis would be running on natural gas.

Ms Arroyo said part of the proceeds from the new taxes on petroleum products would be used to develop alternative fuel in the country, such as natural gas and coco-diesel.

Other reform measures

Her other energy reform measures include increasing reserves of indigenous oil and gas (with a goal of becoming the world's top producer of geothermal energy); developing renewable energy potential, such as biomass, solar, wind and ocean resources; firming up strategic alliances with Saudi Arabia, China, Russia and neighbors in the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean); and implementing tough strong efficiency and conversion programs.

Napocor privatization

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said in an interview, however, that the privatization of the BNPP could likely get off the ground only after 2005, the target that the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. had set for the privatization of 70 percent of Napocor's generation assets in Luzon and the Visayas.

Perez explained that the new mandate from Ms Arroyo with regard to the BNPP would still be fulfilled, only that it would be done in such a way that the ongoing privatization process of the Napocor plants would not be disrupted.

He added that the BNPP could even be an attractive proposition to bidders, who would not be able to acquire any of the Napocor plants that had been placed on the auction block.

Gas delivery system

The BNPP, he said, could be ready for conversion, commissioning and dispatch upon installation of new gas turbines and a gas delivery system there as it already had access to transmission lines and no right-of-way issues.

"I think if there is a gas landing facility in Bataan, whether in Limay or Mariveles, then we could have a pipeline from there to Morong in Bataan to fuel the BNPP with natural gas," he said.

Short-term proposals

Malacañang and business leaders yesterday listed a number of short-term proposals aimed at minimizing the pain of soaring world crude oil prices on the consuming public.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo had agreed to help public transport groups establish their own oil distribution outlets and buy their fuel requirements at wholesale prices.

Bunye said the government was willing to provide training and even low-cost financing to help them get started on these projects.

"I think the transport groups should consider this proposal rather than mount protest actions that would not have any impact on oil prices," Bunye said.

Encourage car pool

Some businessmen also offered their two centavos' worth of advice on how to cushion the impact of the oil price crisis.

Federation of Philippine Industries president Jesus Arranza suggested that the government encourage car pooling among the vehicle owners to save on gas by allowing private cars with two or more passengers access to yellow lanes reserved for public utility buses.

Arranza said the government could spur car owners to use public transport, such as the Edsa MRT or LRT, in going to work by providing parking spaces near the stations.

Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce executive vice president Francis Chua said the government might consider freezing the tax and duty rate on oil imports at the $40 mark. The government would do away with a few dollars and cents of foregone revenues while providing small but welcome relief to the public.

Price stabilization fund

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive vice president Donald Dee said that the government could set up a price stabilization fund that would achieve its goal of having small and frequent price movements, rather than rare but hefty oil price increases.

Unlike the defunct Oil Price Stabilization Fund, where government funds were used to iron out oil price movements, Dee said his proposed fund would use money saved from a drop in prices.

"We could keep pump prices unchanged even if world oil prices have dropped and use the accumulated savings to offset prices increases," Dee said.

Filipinos oppose deregulation

THE IBON Foundation said in a statement that results of a nationwide survey in July suggested that Filipinos have had enough of unrestrained oil prices increases and want the government to put an end to oil deregulation.

Of the 1,681 respondents interviewed last month, 54.67 percent said government should not continue with the implementation of the oil deregulation law, as opposed to 21.5 percent, who supported the policy.

A huge 57 percent of the respondents also said that the oil deregulation law had not been beneficial to consumers, Ibon said.

"The oil deregulation law has only enabled big oil companies to manipulate pump prices and further monopolize the local oil industry," Ibon executive director Rosario Bella Guzman said.

2 lawyers question FPJ legal standing to file poll protest

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE QUESTION of actor Fernando Poe Jr.'s Filipino citizenship, or lack of it, has come up again and it may very well result in his legal protest against the election victory of President Macapagal-Arroyo being dismissed outright.

The two lawyers who last March brought a disqualification case against Poe's presidential candidacy yesterday questioned Poe's citizenship anew before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal which is hearing the election protest of Poe and his vice presidential running mate, Loren Legarda.

In separate petitions, lawyers Victorino Fornier and Ma. Jeanette Tecson challenged Poe's legal standing to file an election protest as he was not a natural-born Filipino citizen. They urged the court to dismiss the protest.

"Considering that [Poe's] objective in his protest is to claim the presidency for himself, upon his failure to conclusively prove that he is a natural-born Filipino citizen, or a showing that he is not so, his election protest would be nothing but an empty and mischievous exercise in inutility," Fornier said.

Fornier and Tecson said that the issue of Poe's citizenship remains unresolved since the Supreme Court has not categorically ruled that he is a natural-born Filipino.

The Supreme Court last March threw out the petition to disqualify Poe from the presidential race by upholding an earlier Commission on Elections decision that Poe was a natural-born Filipino and qualified to run for the country's highest office.

Fornier and Tecson noted that the high court's March ruling had said that the "totality of evidence" did not establish conclusively that Poe was a natural-born Filipino citizen.

The Court ruling only said that the evidence "on hand" only "preponderates" in Poe's favor and was just enough to show that he was not guilty of "material misrepresentation" when he wrote down in his certificate of candidacy that he was a Filipino citizen, they said.

Prove it conclusively

Tecson said that Poe's status as a natural-born Filipino citizen "cannot simply be presumed" but is an issue that is still "a matter of evidence."

Fornier and Tecson said that Poe still has the responsibility to prove that he is a natural-born Filipino.

"FPJ needs to adduce evidence to conclusively prove his being a natural-born Filipino citizen before he can prosecute the present (election) protest," Tecson said.

Fornier said his present petition may even speed up the proceedings in the election protest case. He said that if the PET "conclusively and finally rules that [Poe] is not qualified for the post of president, that ends the instant litigation once and for all."

Fornier and Tecson claimed that Poe was not a natural-born Filipino citizen since he was born on Aug. 20, 1939 as an illegitimate son of Allan F. Poe and American Bessie Kelley, and thus should follow the citizenship of his mother.

They said that even if he had been legitimized later, Poe still could not be considered a natural-born Filipino citizen since the law defines a natural-born Filipino citizen as a citizen of the country "from birth without having to perform any act to acquire or perfect his Philippine citizenship."

Court divided

"Even granting that (Poe) was legitimized by the marriage of his father and mother, that would not transform him into a natural-born Filipino citizen, because he was an American citizen at the moment of birth and he became a Filipino citizen only through a special kind of naturalization," Fornier said.

He noted that the high tribunal in its March decision had been divided on the issue of Poe's citizenship.

"While eight justices voted to dismiss the consolidated petitions, five justices dissented and one abstained. Clearly, the issue begs for a definitive resolution if only to provide a conclusive precedent for similar controversies in the future," Tecson added.

Why only now?

By Fe Zamora

FORMER Sen. Loren Legarda yesterday asked why President Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro were claiming at this late date that they were the ones who were cheated in the May 10 elections.

"They did not question the certificates of canvass then, so why the belated charges?" said Legarda who addressed the Media Forum Newstand at the Ambassador Hotel in Ermita yesterday.

At the same forum, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. also questioned Ms Arroyo's and De Castro's claim of being the victims of electoral fraud.

He accused their allies in the joint congressional canvassing of votes of "rushing" the process to ensure their victory.

Pimentel claimed that a recount of votes in some 15 to 25 provincial certificates of canvass would "wipe out" the lead of Ms Arroyo and De Castro in the areas where the alleged cheating took place—Cebu, Bohol, Iloilo and Pangasinan.

He said the process of opening some 120,000 election returns from the contested provinces would take less than a year. "It can be done," Pimentel said.

On July 24, Poe and Legarda formally contested the results of the May 10 elections, seeking a vote recount that they said would give Poe a lead of 1.3 million, enough to overtake Ms Arroyo's 1.1 million winning margin.

Legarda also claimed that a recount would show her winning by as much as five million votes against De Castro.

On Thursday, Ms Arroyo and De Castro filed a counter-protest before the PET, saying that it was Poe and Legarda who had cheated them.

They said the opposition candidates' protest should be dismissed "outright" since they were "insufficient in form and substance, speculative in nature and based on a general and scattershot approach instead of citing specific incidents of fraud."

Legarda countered that the two "very clearly did not read" their protest petition.

Most Pinoys don't believe GMA won—survey

From page A1

prising that Joma often quotes it," he said, referring to self-exiled Communist Party founding chair Jose Ma. Sison.

Tiglao has in the past described Ibon as "an ideologically left-wing group."

Moot and academic

Romulo Macalintal, the President's election lawyer, said the Ibon survey did not mean anything.

"The issue is moot and academic. The best evidence of the credible election is the proclamation of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Vice President Noli de Castro by Congress. No other evidence can overcome that proclamation," Macalintal said in a phone interview.

Macalintal said surveys have been found to be wrong and their results depend on the outfit conducting the survey.

He questioned the timing of the survey when there was an election protest pending before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal which he said was "in danger of being dismissed by the Supreme Court."

Opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. and his running mate Loren Legarda have filed a protest in the high court which acts as the PET.

Ms Arroyo and De Castro have filed a counter-protest.

Macalintal said the Poe-Legarda protest would be dismissed because they simply had no basis and "merely copied" other protests.

The Ibon survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percent at a 95-percent confidence level. The interviews were done face-to-face by staff from Ibon's survey department.

When asked who they thought won the elections, 43.43 percent of the respondents answered Fernando Poe Jr., while 36.47 percent said it was Ms Arroyo.

Split votes

But when asked who they actually voted for, the respondents were split: 32.66 percent answered Poe, while 31.05 percent chose Ms Arroyo.

Of the 31.05 percent respondents who said they voted for Ms Arroyo, 19.45 percent also thought the election results were not credible.

Rhea de los Santos, head of Ibon's Media and Publications Office, said Ibon's local offices helped in the conduct of the survey. Ibon has three regional offices in Davao, Pagadian and Cebu, two representative offices in Panay and Naga, and a national office in Sta Mesa, Manila.

Survey questions

Alvin Calamiong heads the foundation's survey department, with Tom Tallado of the University of the Philippines School of Statistics as consultant, said De los Santos.

The survey asked the following questions in Filipino: Who do you think won the May 10, 2004 elections? In your opinion, was the congressional canvassing conducted by the 22-man committee credible? Whom did you vote for President in the May 10, 2004 elections?

Cool it, Pimentel ...

From page A1

"Cool off... [so as] not to exacerbate matters," was the advice he gave his two cranky colleagues, Pimentel told the INQUIRER yesterday.

But to make sure he didn't get a jab in the face himself, he told them so via text messages on Thursday night.

Lacson returned his text message immediately, accepting his suggestion for a truce, Pimentel said. Angara has not responded.

Pimentel said he had acted swiftly upon learning of the media interview that Angara had given on Thursday, lashing out at Lacson for divulging details of a confidential minority caucus last Monday.

During the caucus, Angara questioned Lacson's suitability as a member of the Senate minority and cited three instances in which Lacson allegedly betrayed the opposition.

Lacson dismissed all of Angara's charges as "rubbish and outlandish," and insisted that he would stay with the minority "even if one or two don't like my face."

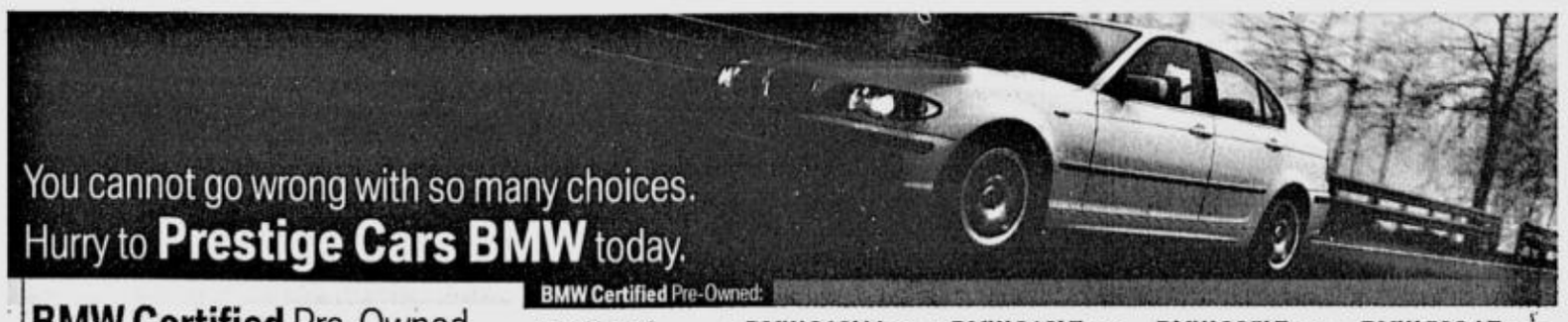
Yesterday, Pimentel called for a "ceasefire."

In a phone interview, he told the INQUIRER: "I want to find a way for them to co-exist, live and let live within the ranks of the minority."

As the matter was not to be taken lightly, Pimentel said, the nine-member minority would discuss the problem during its next weekly caucus on Monday. He admitted that the tiff could affect the bloc, especially if Angara or Lacson—or both—decide to leave.

"We certainly don't want things to get worse."

The two lawmakers have been squabbling since Angara supported the presidential bid of Fernando Poe Jr., forcing Lacson to run for president as an independent, and effectively splitting the opposition.



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Desk Editors Cenon B. Bibe, Ester G. Dipasupil

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Sleek underpass complex for QC's major avenues

By Tina G. Santos

MORE "user-friendly" roads for Quezon City.

City government officials made this pledge as they revealed plans to transform major roads into ideal and "world-class" thoroughfares with the construction of at least four underground passageways.

Architect Gerardo Magat, of the city planning department, said they plan to build the underpass complex on four sites: on Elliptical Road, Commonwealth (now Don Mariano Marcos), Visayas, and Quezon Avenues.

But Magat said they would give priority to the proposed underpass on Elliptical Road which would be built in front of City Hall.

This would give pedestrians easy access to and from the Quezon Memorial Circle, he added.

The Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) initially proposed the building of footbridges or overpasses in various areas of the city, but Mayor Feliciano Belmonte had opposed the plan, Magat said.

"The mayor wants to preserve the park. That's why he rejected any plan to build any structure that would destroy the park's beauty and the surrounding scenery," Magat said.

Many parkgoers had complained that they have a hard time going to the Quezon Memorial Circle ever since the MMDA removed the islands on the two-kilometer rotonda.

"We risk life and limb every time we cross the road," said Amy Sandoval, a 35-year-old mother who brings her three children to the park regularly on weekends.

"In the past, we used the center islands where we would wait for the cars to pass by before crossing over to the Circle, " she said. "But the islands are gone."

Today, there is no such buffer zone.

There is virtually no protection offered to pedestrians, who often dart from one lane to another, risking accidents, just to cross the street.

There had been several instances when pedestrians had been bumped, hit, or sideswept by vehicles cruising the road at top speed, a waiter in one of the restaurants inside the park told the INQUIRER.

On a lucky day, MMDA men carrying "Stop" placards can be seen bringing pedestrians safely across the busy circle.

"But more often than not, they are nowhere to be found," observed Pasencia Abuel, a fruit vendor.

"You would usually see the MMDA aide resting under a tree or eating, not in the places where they are needed," she added.

Magat said the project would cost the city government about P30 million for each underpass. Work is expected to begin before the year ends.

"We're just completing the paperwork, but once that is over, we can already proceed with the project, "he added.

FOR PEACE
Members of the cause-oriented group Peace Camp offer 59 white roses and candles for world peace in front of the Japanese Embassy in Manila in remembrance of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the close of World War II in 1945. JOAN BONDOC

Late sexy star's dad arrested

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE FATHER of the late sexy star Halina Perez was arrested on Thursday night for allegedly shooting to death the newly-elected vice mayor of Sta. Maria, Laguna.

Renato Uri was caught by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Army in his house on Real Vasquez Street, Sta. Maria, on the basis of a warrant issued by Judge Nicolas Fadul.

Uri, whose daughter (Vanessa Uri in real life) was killed in a vehicular accident on March 4 in Camarines Sur, is the prime suspect in the killing of Vice Mayor Emmanuel Rex Real inside a billiards hall last month.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco presented Uri to the media yesterday, saying witnesses had identified the latter as the one who shot Real.

No motive, yet

However, Wycoco could not say what Uri's motive was.

Uri was reportedly an employee of the defeated vice mayor.

Uri denied the accusation against him.

"*Hindi po ako ang gumawa nun* (I did not do it)," he said, responding to reporters' questions about the accusation against him.

In a report, NBI Lucena office Director Celso Ginga said witnesses tagged Uri as the one who went to the billiards hall where Real was on the night of July 18.

Witnesses reported seeing Uri pull out a .45-cal. pistol and shoot Real, hitting the latter four times in the chest and back. Real did not make it to the Gen. Cailles District Hospital in Pakil town.

He just walked away

Uri then allegedly walked away from the crime scene.

The billiards hall is owned by Real's brother Dick and is located beside the victim's house.

Real was known for his down-to-earth manner and pro-poor stance. His wife Pacita earlier told the INQUIRER that her husband had received messages advising him to always use a bulletproof vest and that he would not be allowed to sit as vice mayor.

However, Real reportedly did not take the threats seriously, saying his conscience was clean and that he had nothing to fear.

Alleged killer of kin of Ricky Reyes falls

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PRINCIPAL suspect in the killing of college student Christian Reyes, nephew of prominent hairdresser, Ricky Reyes, has fallen into the hands of authorities nine months after the incident.

Jomar Renamantao was arrested by homicide investigators of the Western Police District (WPD) Thursday night in Pasig City on the basis of a warrant issued by the Manila Regional Trial Court.

Renamantao allegedly shot Reyes when the latter refused to give his cellphone to three men during a robbery, said Sr. Insp. Alberto Peco, WPD homicide chief.

The 20-year-old student, who was a computer applications major at the College of St. Benilde, was driving his Honda CRV on his way home to Quezon City when he was killed on Nov. 20, 2003.

Reyes was stopped in traffic at the corner of Quirino Avenue and the Osmeña Highway when two men, one of whom was armed with a .38-cal. revolver, came up to his open window and asked for his cellphone.

The third suspect acted as lookout.

Reyes pushed away the suspect's hand but was met with two shots. The suspects then fled without getting his Nokia 3650.

According to Peco, Renamantao was arrested along Esguerra Street in Pasig City at 9:30 p.m. by SP02 Virgo Villareal and SP04 Alfredo Salazar.

Renamantao is facing an attempted robbery with homicide charge for Reyes' killing.

Earlier, another suspect in the killing identified as Roberto Vargas was arrested by police. Vargas had identified Renamantao and his brother Jeffrey as the two men involved in the incident.

2 'hospitals on wheels' for PGH

By TJ Burgonio

TWO MINI "hospitals on wheels" are the latest acquisitions of the government-run University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital on Taft Avenue in Manila.

The two fully-equipped ambulances worth P5 million each are expected to boost the hospital's capability in transporting seriously ill or wounded patients to the PGH.

While each vehicle can only accommodate one patient at a time, the new ambulances are more spacious than the regular type, giving the patient more breathing space and the medical staff onboard more room to attend to him.

Both are equipped with scoop stretchers or trolley cots, defibrillators, portable respirator devices, suction machines, pulse oxymeters, oxygen tanks, infusion devices, vacuum mattresses and medical kits, among others.

For each ambulance, there would be an emergency medicine doctor and two technical emergency technicians.

With the acquisitions, doctors are optimistic that the survival chances of a patient on his way to the hospital would improve.

"This is like bringing the hospital closer to the community," said Dr. Geoffrey Corpuz, chief resident of the UP-PGH Department of Emergency Medicine..

The ambulances were acquired through a soft loan from the Spanish government.

Robbers use police uniforms as props

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE FOILED bank robbery in Navotas Thursday was not the first time the suspects wore police uniforms.

The same ploy was used three months ago when several robbers wearing police uniforms managed to cart away millions of pesos from a bank in Valenzuela City.

Investigators could not yet ascertain whether the robbers in both cases were really policemen. But they said the robbers probably just pretended to be lawmen to gain access to the banks.

In the robbery try the other morning, the robbers in police uniforms and armed with high-powered firearms got inside Metrobank branch on H. Lopez Street by telling the security guard they were policemen responding to an alarm.

Like the previous incident, the security guard believed the suspects.

Aside from these two incidents, the same ploy was used in several robberies in the cities of Caloocan, Quezon and Makati.

Policemen interviewed by the INQUIRER admitted that it was easy for anyone to buy police uniforms.

Accredited sellers of fabric and uniforms near Camp Crame in Quezon City cater to customers without asking if the person buying is a lawman or not.

Policemen said they could buy uniforms from other stores, where these are even cheaper.

Angara and Lacson degrade Senate

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE SHOUTING match between Senators Edgardo Angara and Panfilo Lacson during a minority caucus shows how petty most of the present crop of senators can get.

And what did they quarrel about? Not about legislation, the main job of the Senate, but about who turned traitor to the opposition during the last elections.

The two senators washed their dirty linen in public. Angara accused Lacson of demanding P300 million from opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr.'s party in exchange for withdrawing from the presidential race.

Another accusation that Angara hurled at Lacson was that billionaire businessman Lucio Tan had paid him to stay in the race.

All those reports that Lacson demanded money from the FPJ camp and that he was paid off by Lucio Tan were just rumors before. Nobody believed them.

But now that Angara has made them public, these have taken on the semblance of truth.

* * *

The Angara-Lacson shouting match made the two look like two prostitutes quarreling over a john.

Lacson showed his upbringing when he swore on the lives of the members of his family just to stress that the accusations against him were not true.

Angara and Lacson not only degraded themselves, but also the august body to which they belong.

Former Sen. Arturo Tolentino, among the last breed of true senators who died of old age a few days ago, probably turned in his coffin.

* * *

Arvin Ailee Genato and Dave Rex Perejan, both in their early 20s, were held up by two knife-wielding men in Sta. Rosa, Laguna last July 4.

Genato was stabbed in the back when he refused to hand over his cellular phone to the armed men. He nearly died from the stab wound.

The two had the presence of mind to get the plate number of the car that the robbers used (PJP 486). The car was traced to Rodrigo Silverio who owns a pawnshop that sells cellphones at the Arranque Market in Manila.

Both Genato and Perejan positively identified Silverio as the man who stabbed Genato.

In other words, pawnshop owner Silverio's other preoccupation is robbing people of their cellphones to supply his pawnshop.

But Silverio remains scot-free because the police in Sta. Rosa, Laguna have to wait for a warrant of arrest to be issued by the courts.

Meanwhile, Silverio is free to rob more people of their cellphones.

* * *

Why can't the police arrest a crime suspect based on the positive identification of a victim and vital witnesses even without a court warrant when the case involves a heinous crime?

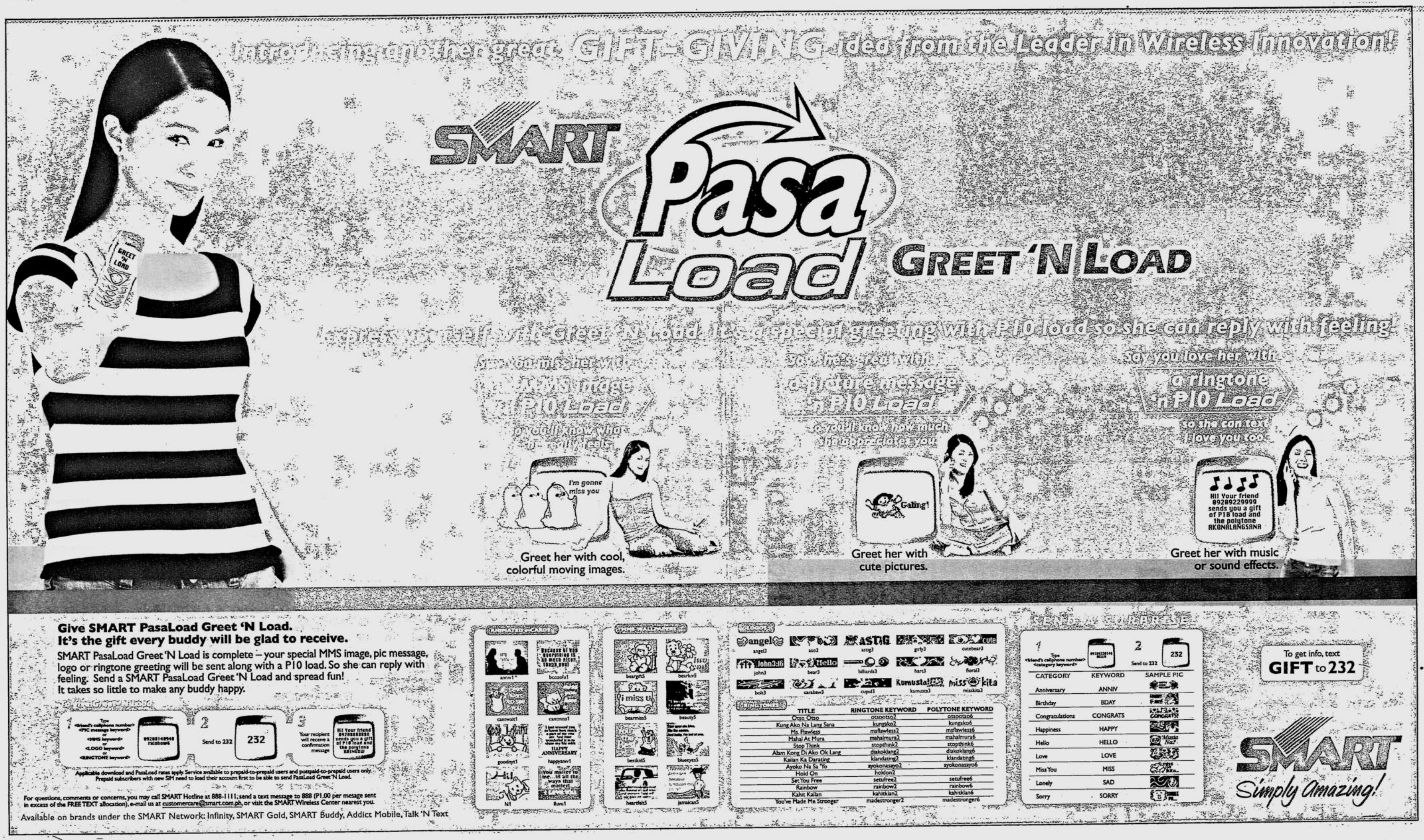
Why should the police have to wait for the warrant of arrest knowing that the suspect can flee?

Because that's the law.

* * *

No wonder most crime victims don't go to the police. They know the police won't act on their complaints right away. The police will wait for a court warrant.

Our laws tend to side with criminals rather than their victims.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2 Send to 232 232
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RINGTONES

TITLE	RINGTONE KEYWORD	POLYTONE KEYWORD
Otso Otso	otsootso2	otsootso6
Kung Ako Na Lang Sana	kungako2	kungako6
Ms. Flawless	msflawless2	msflawless6
Mahal At Mura	mahalmura2	mahalmura6
Stop Think	stopthink2	stopthink6
Alam Kong Di Ako Ok Lang	diakoklang2	diakoklang6
Kailan Ka Darating	klandating2	klandating6
Ayoko Na Sa 'Yo	ayokonasayo2	ayokonasayo6
Hold On	holdon2	
Set You Free	setufree2	setufree6
Rainbow	rainbow2	rainbow6
Kahit Kailan	kahitklan2	kahitklan6
You've Made Me Stronger	madestronger2	madestronger6

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Birthday	BDAY	
Congratulations	CONGRATS	
Happiness	HAPPY	
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Lonely	SAD	
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BASKETBALL: USAB World Tour; 5 p.m.; IBC 13—The embattled Americans face medal favorite Serbia and Montenegro in this warm-up for Athens.

WNBA All-Star Game; 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. (r); Solar Sports— The best WNBA players take on the US Olympic Women's Team in the Big Apple.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

Knights rip Blazers; Stags down Bombers

By Jasmine W. Payo

DEFENDING champion Letran leisurely opened its second-round campaign as the Knights trounced the luckless St. Benilde Blazers, 96-70, yesterday in the 80th NCAA senior basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

But action was tight in the other senior contest earlier, with role player Jong Rebuya eventually lifting the San Sebastian Stags past the Jose Rizal Heavy Bombers, 73-65.

Letran and San Sebastian joined Mapua in second place with 5-3 win-loss cards. JRU dropped to 3-5, while St. Benilde continued to search for the winning formula in eight games.

The Knights built a 16-point buffer early in the second quarter, which the Blazers then trimmed to a single-digit deficit, 36-27. Letran, though, quickly got its act together for a 26-point halftime advantage, 58-32.

All 12 Knights fielded scored with rookie center Mark Andaya topscoring with 15 points. Ace guard Ronjay Enrile, back in action after a one-game suspension, added 11.

Rebuya finished with 12 points, including a triple that gave the Stags a 65-55 lead midway in the fourth quarter. The sophomore guard added nine caroms in his best performance of the season.

"We combined good offense and defense. Rebuya also stepped up with his shooting," said San Sebastian coach Turo Valenzona.

In junior play, the Light Bombers won over the Staglets, 79-74, for their second win in eight matches. The Staglets dropped to fifth place with a 4-4 record.

GAMES MONDAY
(Rizal Coliseum)
11:30 a.m.—Mapua vs PCU (Jrs)
1:15 p.m.—Mapua vs PCU (Srs)
3 p.m.—Perpetual vs San Beda (Jrs)
4:45 p.m.—Perpetual vs San Beda (Srs)

First Game (Jrs)

JRU 79—Lopez 28, Azotea 25, Larida 16, Lituania 5, Espeleta 4, Antonio 1, Canalita 0, Capobres 0, Pineda 0,

SSC 74—Salamat 20, Galang 14, Juan 11, Gonzales 11, Balila 5, Subia 5, Lopez 4, Morales 2, Del Rio 2, Maderal 0, R. Reyes 0.

Quarters: 12-21, 36-35, 57-56, 79-74.

Second Game (Srs)

SSC 73—Baluyot 14, Gonzales 12, Rebuya 12, Moore 10, Vicente 9, Maneclang 5, Aguilar 4, Ballesteros 4, Najorda 3, Uy 0.

JRU 65—Fajardo 26, Te 11, Santos 8, Coyukang 6, Jorge 5, Lindaya 5, Magtahao 4, Domangcas 0, Hataque 0.

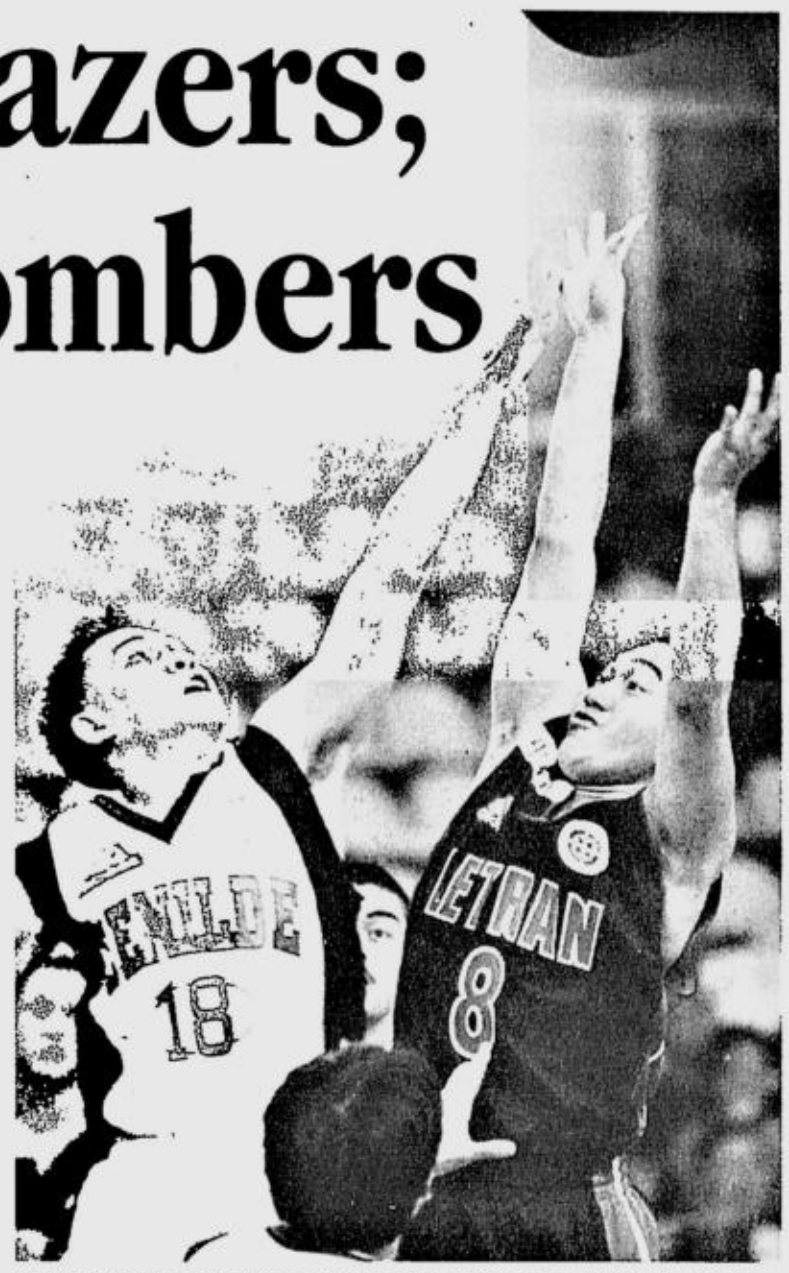
Quarters: 20-19, 37-31, 52-48, 73-65.

Third Game (Srs)

LETRAN 96—Andaya 15, Aban 14, Aldave 12, Enrile 11, Rodriguez 10, Mondragon 8, Alcaraz 7, Santos 5, Bautista 4, Anabo 4, Quinday 4, Balneg 2.

BENILDE 70—Sagad 21, Good 13, Orbeta 12, Abad 9, Manding 7, Pagulo 4, Reyes 2, Morial 2.

Quarters: 22-14, 58-32, 75-49, 96-70.



LETRAN'S Boyet Bautista (right) defies the defense of St. Benilde's Gilbert Good for a running jumper. ROMY HOMILLADA

US magazine sees Tañamor bronze medal

SPORTS Illustrated has picked Filipino boxer Harry Tañamor to win the bronze medal in the men's light flyweight (48 kg) division in the Athens Olympics.

In keeping with its tradition, the 50-year old magazine has made its medal predictions for all 31 sports events prior to the start of the Olympics.

Writer Brian Cazenueve chose Russian Sergei Kazakov to bag the light flyweight gold medal with Cuban Yan Bartelemy settling for the silver. China's Zou Shiming was selected to claim the other bronze medal.

Tañamor is one of four boxers representing the Philippines in Athens. He is joined by welterweight Romeo Brin, flyweight Violito Payla and middleweight Christopher Camat.

Apart from Tañamor, none of the other 15 Filipino Olympians were predicted to claim a medal in the quadrennial sporting event.

The Time-Warner publication selected American Steven Lopez to win the gold in the 80 kg division in men's taekwondo while not mentioning Filipino Donald Geisler as a medal winner.

Interestingly, the magazine predicted that the US men's basketball team, composed of NBA players, would still win the gold medal. The US squad was routed by Italy, 78-95, earlier this week. Italy wasn't picked to win a medal.

The magazine also forecast that American swimming sensation Michael Phelps would win five gold medals. Phelps is entered in eight events. *Lorenzo Z. Manguiat, Contributor*

Tommy gains final round with 77

TOMMY Manotoc lost some steam due to back pains but assured himself of a final round stint in the British Senior Amateur Open after a five-over 77 at the Berkshire's Red Course in England Thursday, with 29 players still to finish the second round because of rains.

Counting his opening 72 at the Blue, the 55-year-old mainstay of Canlubang in the Philippine Airlines Interclub had a 149 total, six strokes off the lead held by Australian Brian Grieve and American Kemp Richardson.

Grieve, a 59-year-old from Perth, bucked long rain delays to shoot a 71 like Richardson at the Blue to be at level 143, good for a one-shot advantage over Englishman Alan Squires (73, Red) heading into the final 18 holes.

MANOTOC

Manotoc, who dropped into a seventh-place tie from fourth, was also affected by the three-hour rain delay, going four-over in his last four holes, including a triple on No. 16.

Richardson and William Burke, who shot a 70 at the Red, were the first Americans to crash the Top 5.

Burke tied former Walker Cup player Peter Hedges (72 at the Blue) at 145.

Another American, Houston native Jerry Hudgins, scored the first ace of the week. It came with a 7-iron at the 147-yard second at the Red and allowed him to sign for 72 and 146, tied with three others for fourth spot.

Defending champion Roy Smethurst carded a second round 78 with borrowed clubs after his set was stolen from his car Wednesday night. At 153, he is likely to miss the cut when the second round is completed Friday morning. *Musong R. Castillo*

DECENT SHOT: "The Jet" hones up for the Athens Olympics, not with the pistol that's won him global acclaim. RUDY ESPERAS

7 DAYS TO ATHENS

Jethro doesn't want pressure in firing for gold

By Musong R. Castillo

FORMER world speed shooting champ Jethro Dionisio has a new toy, a 12-gauge shotgun. He tries to shoot for the Philippines' first Olympic gold medal with it.

From firing a pistol with mind-boggling quickness, Dionisio will wear the national colors in Athens for the first time as an Olympian in an event he has taken up just four years ago—trap shooting.

"I really want to become an Olympian, that's why I took up trap because this is the only chance I have," said Dionisio. "I just couldn't wait for the time that the IOC would start including speed shooting in the Olympics."

Trap shooting is an event that uses a shotgun in an open field where clay birds come out from a bunker and are shot in the air. Each shooter has a total of 125 targets—75 in the first day and 50 in the next.

Only the top six scores advance to the medal round.

It is a big departure from the sport that has given him global acclaim as the world's quickest draw three times in the 1990s.

"I now feel comfortable (with the sport). I haven't touched a pistol in years just to focus myself for this," he said.

Dionisio threaded the proverbial eye of the needle in booking a slot to Athens, spending countless hours—and a bundle of money—to earn the points needed.

It was a project that took almost four years to complete, competing in every corner of the world to earn Minimum Qualifying School (MQS) points for an Olympics slot.

He saw action in the World Championships in 2002 and 2003, finishing in the top 30 both times and gaining the experience needed.

The 32-year-old father of two was informed of his wild card to the Olympics only last April.

"That was the realization of the first part of my dream— to represent our country in the Olympics," narrated Jethro, who immediately planed to Australia to train under the watchful eyes of Adam Vela, who, ironically, is one of those favored in Athens.

Jethro says he has no high aspirations. Not that he is not giving himself a decent, pardon the pun, shot in Athens, he just does not want to put pressure on himself.

Fact is, Dionisio is simulating the competition the best that he can—from bullets to be used to the gears that already have the Philippine flag in them.

It's either you hit your target or you don't. It's as clear-cut as that.

And "The Jet" rarely misses often.

Top sports leaders predict an Olympic medal

LUCK, if not a miracle, could help win for the country its first Olympic gold, but the best the top three RP sports officials could vow yesterday was an improvement on the Sydney Games from where the national contingent went home empty-handed four years ago.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain and chef de mission Steve Hontiveros expressed optimism that the 16-athlete national delegation would be able to produce a medal in the Athens Olympics which opens on Friday.

Dayrit, for one, mentioned boxers Harry Tañamor, Violito Payla, Romeo Brin and Christopher Camat and jins Donald Geisler, Tshomlee Go, and Mary Antoinette Rivero as strong medal hopefuls.

Buhain and Hontiveros concurred.

First gold

The trio, who guested in the SCOOP sa Kamayan weekly session yesterday, believed that, with some luck, the country may yet capture the country's first Olympic gold medal.

Buhain, whose agency handled the Olympic preparations, declared that the Filipino hopefuls are in the best of health, prepared and are raring to do the country proud in the biggest battle of their sporting career.

He added that the athletes' morale has been further boosted by the encouraging words and blessings President Macapagal-Arroyo gave them during their courtesy call at Malacañang last Thursday.

Dayrit also noted that, aside from the boxers and the jins, shooter Jethro Dionisio and archer Jasmin Figueroa could also pull some surprises as their sports are likewise not measured by heft and height.

Dayrit disclosed that, for the first time in the country's participation, the entire 34-man national delegation will be wearing the national attire—*barong tagalog* for the male members and *baro't saya* for women.

Windfall

A windfall of incentives from both the government and private sectors awaits the Filipino medalist in Athens.

Samsung Electronics Philippines has committed to grant P1 million for an Olympic gold, P300,000 for silver and P100,000 for bronze.

Samsung president Sang Youl Eom said, "This is in support of our collective desire of extending more inspiration for the heroism and sacrifice of Filipino athletes."

The package is apart from the mandatory incentives given by the national government pursuant to Republic Act 9064, whereby P5 million will be awarded for a gold medal, P2.5 million for a silver and P1 million for a bronze.

R.A. 9064 or the "National Athletes, Coaches and Trainers Benefits and Incentives Act" was signed into law on April 5, 2001 by the President.

La Salle-UE match also a clash of Pumarens

THE PUMAREN brothers would rather turn their on-court rivalry into revelry when Franz's La Salle meets Dindo's University of the East in the UAAP men's basketball tournament at 4 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

"Probably the loser will treat the winner to dinner," Franz chuckled.

Their father, Pilo, and older brother, Derek—former ballplayers who also became bench tacticians—have sat behind the UE bench in support of rookie Dindo.

"This time they have to stay in the middle," joked Franz.

But seriously, the Archers' veteran mentor and the rest of the Pumarens are obviously proud of Dindo's early achievements.

UE, along with Adamson and University of Sto. Tomas, are tied for fourth with 3-3 slates. La Salle is in solo third at 4-2.

"Being a young team, I think they're overachieving. I'm not saying this because I'm being biased for my brother, but nobody even gave them a second look to be in this position," said Franz, who steered the Archers' championship run from 1998 to 2001.

"We cannot take them (Warriors) for granted. I think UE is playing with a lot of heart and passion at this stage. I think they want to prove that even if they're a young team, they're capable of pulling off surprises," he added.

STANDINGS	W	L
Ateneo	6	0
FEU	5	1
La Salle	4	2
Adamson	3	3
UE	3	3
UST	3	3
NU	0	6
UP	0	6

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
11:30 a.m.—Adamson vs UST (Women)
*2 p.m.—Adamson vs UST (Srs)
*4 p.m.—La Salle vs UE (Srs)
6 p.m.—UE vs UP (Women)
*Live on Studio 23

In the other varsity matchup, Adamson aims to halt its two-game skid when it battles UST at 2 p.m.

The Falcons earned respect—and sowed fear—when they shocked the Archers for an early 3-1 record. But doubt is now in the air after their back-to-back disappointments.

And the Falcons' campaign looked bleak with veteran point guard Ramil Tagupa out for the rest of the season due to a knee injury.

The Tigers, meanwhile, are coming off a rousing 74-72 victory over the Warriors via a buzzer-beating jumper by Danny Pribhdas.

In women's play, the Lady Falcons and the Tigresses tangle at 11:30 a.m., while the UE Amazons and UP Lady Maroons clash at 6 p.m. *Jasmine W. Payo*

LEAP OF FAITH
Filipino equestrienne Toni Leviste, aboard Globe Platinum Leap of Faith, clears the final bar on her way to victory in the first leg of the World Cup equestrian qualifier (Southeast Asian League) last Sunday at the Bukit Kiara Country Club in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Leviste outclassed the competition, including all the male riders in her class, by taking no demerits in the first round and then finishing with the fastest time in the jump-off. Three Malaysian riders—Syed Omar, Quizier Ambak, and Qadil Ambak—wound up behind Leviste in the finals. The next leg of the World Cup qualifier is on Aug. 15 in Kuang, Malaysia.

WIM Mariano digs in on payroll anomaly

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE SLAPPING incident involving Woman International Master Christine Rose Mariano and an employee of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines just might open a can of worms in the already controversial association.

Mariano, who according to witnesses was slapped by NCFP messenger Chad Fang at the height of an altercation at the payroll section of the Philippine Sports Commission on Thursday, accused Fang of "habitually" signing in behalf of national chess players to get their salaries without proper authorization.

In fact, their fight broke out when Mariano asked Fang why there was already a signature on the payroll for fellow WIM Joy Lomibao when the latter was still in Malaysia.

"It bolstered our suspicion that he (Fang) has something to do with the falsified signatures in our payroll in the past," said Mariano.

But secretary general Sammy Estimo, an uncle of Fang, said it is a usual practice in the NCFP for players to ask Fang to sign for their payroll. It was done, he said, with full authority of the players.

Estimo added that from now on, all players will be required to go to the NCFP offices in Quezon City to sign their payroll. "We will be strict this time because the boy (Fang) only wants to help but he is put in a bad light instead," said Estimo.

Both Mariano and Fang filed charges of oral defamation and slander by deed against each other at the WPD Station 9 after their tiff.

PBL selection no match for Qatar national five

DOHA, QATAR—Team PBL bowed to the Qatar National Team, 73-50, Thursday at the start of the second International Group basketball championship at the Khalifa Stadium here.

The Qataris thus exacted revenge on the Filipinos, who beat them in Manila prior to their stint in the Jones Cup recently. In that game, Team PBL was leading by five points with less than a minute left when Qatar's American coach made a scene, hitting a game official that prompted the referees to stop the game.

The Filipinos next play Egypt, which beat Jordan, 81-77, in the second game of the four-team, eight-day tournament. That game will be played at 8 p.m. Saturday (1 a.m. Sunday in Manila).

Coach Junel Baculi, who owns seven PBL titles, was disappointed at the team's poor first game.

"The players owe it not just to themselves to play with pride, they also owe it to their *kababayans* here who could not find much reason to cheer them," he said. "We failed to execute on offense and did not communicate well on defense."

Fed golf: Alabang, N'woods have slight edge

ALABANG eyes a return trip to the finals when it battles giant-killer Canlubang while Manila Southwoods collides with Royal Northwoods in the semifinals of the Johnnie Walker-Federation Golf League this weekend.

After sweeping past Valley in last week's quarterfinals, titleholder Alabang goes up against a side which ousted 2002 champion Manila Golf in come-from-behind fashion.

It will be another home-and-away duel with Alabang hoping to barge into the title tiff again after prevailing over Manila Golf last year. Canlubang, meanwhile, is making its first semifinal stint since the league's inception seven years ago.

Manila Southwoods, fresh from two close victories that put it into the Final Four of the Fed League, also co-sponsored by Pagcor and Smart, will have its hands full handling the challenge of a powerhouse Northwoods of Bulacan.

Southwoods needed a big win over Orchard to barge into the playoff round then won a sudden-death playoff against eliminations top-notcher Riviera through the high-low tandem of Tonlits Asistio and Sonny Bitong.

The Northwoods golfers go into their tiff with Southwoods with their confidence soaring following a 7-1 rout of 2001 winner Forest Hills.

Aguilar, Cariño boost Asian karting bids

COMBATOIRE, India—Bosch Intelco-Team Philippines drivers Marty Aguilar and JP Cariño came up with sizzling performances in the finals of the JK Tyre Asian Zone Karting Open Championships Sunday to fortify their respective title bids in the 2004 Asian Zone Karting Open Championship series at the Kari Motor Speedway here.

Only 13, Aguilar emerged the new RP karting hero with his impressive triumph against more experienced rivals in the Rotax Max Juniors class.

Cariño, the 2003 Formula Toyota national champion, almost stole the limelight from India's Raymond Banajee before settling for second in the Rotax Max Seniors class.

Aguilar was in his element all weekend as he grabbed the pole position in the time trials and won the pre-qualifying and the finals heats.

He checked in three seconds clear of the second placer, Armaan Ebrahim, India's top junior karter in the finals. Shafiq Ali of Malaysia and Indonesia's Zulfikar Fahmi finished third and fourth, respectively.

With the victory, Aguilar moved up to second place in the standings with 170 points, a mere 2 points behind leader Ebrahim.

Cariño finished first in the pre-finals against a field that included celebrated Indian racer Narain Karthikeyan, the 1996 Formula Asia champion who test-drove for Jordan-Honda, Jaguar and Minardi Cosworth in Formula One.

Cariño led the final race in the early going before a driving miscue on the sixth lap sent him down to fourth place.

Instead of losing heart, Cariño unleashed a furious rally that enabled him to pass Karthikeyan a few laps later and then last year's champion, Arya Setyaki of Indonesia, with a "kamikaze" overtaking maneuver on a high-speed downhill corner of the circuit in the payoff lap to snare second place.

Bibat grabs last Putra berth

MICHAEL Bibat thwarted Boyet Saragoza's final-round charge and clinched the fourth and last berth in the national Putra Cup team despite a closing 77 yesterday at Riviera's Langer course in Silang, Cavite.

Bibat's second straight six-over-par card was enough to hold off Saragoza, who tried to battle back from eight strokes down only to fall short with a 71.

The Southwoods' mainstay thus joined seeded players Juvic Pagunsan, Marvin Dumandan and Jun Bernis in the RP team seeing action in the Putra Cup slated Aug. 24 at the Imperial Golf Club in Indonesia. Bibat finished with a four-day total of 301.

The interview that never was

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

A READER wants to know what happened to my interview with Bobby Fischer some 25 years ago. Thank you. Gladly, here it is.

As I said here a while back, the interview was set at a hotel inside a village (BF Homes?) in Parañaque. I wonder if that hotel is still around.

Time of interview: 4 a.m. Weird? Fischer wanted that time.

OK, you want more flashback?

Boy Manuel of the then Daily Express and I arrived at the hotel about 3:30 a.m. We were groggy but could we complain? This was the reigning world chess champion; he could always get away with crime.

We needed to be on time or we might lose the chance to interview the world's, well, most popular chess figure at that time. For a budding sportswriter, this was the chance of a lifetime.

When Florencio Campomanes finally led Boy and I to Fischer's room, Fischer was eating ripe mangoes while lying on his bed, a single pillow, folded, propping up his head.

"That's his favorite fruit now," said Campo.

We were not allowed to immediately go near him. We stood from a distance in his suite, reduced to watching him finish his serving of two mangoes. He was tall, almost skinny, his white long sleeves loose enough to conceal a lean frame. He wore black pants, and his black shoes were on. His eyes were alert, like an eagle always on the lookout for a prey. He occasionally threw glances at us in between spoonful of mangoes, the way a scared kid would when suddenly surrounded by new faces. He seemed uncomfortable, edgy.

I was fidgety myself and seriously thought of leaving the room—and rushing off to the hotel bar for a drink. But Campo, always the patient man that he is, prevailed upon me to stay.

Not long after, the proper introductions were done. After shaking hands, saying our "hellos" and "nice to meet ya," Fischer rose from his bed and headed for the showers. When he resurfaced, he went to Campo and whispered something. Afterward, Campo approached us and said, "I'm sorry, dear fellas, but the interview has to be cancelled. The world champion is in no mood for interviews today."

Just like that?

Yeah, just like that.

You are dealing with an eccentric, if not a fire-breathing genius, anything's possible. You gotta behave or else . . .

There were no goodbyes. Fischer didn't even bother to wave goodbye, nor look at us, as we headed for the door. Just moments ago, he returned to his bed, and started reading a newspaper, or pretended to be—the white sheets underneath his body. His black shoes were on, white long sleeves tucked in. His curly hair neatly combed.

We weren't even 30 minutes at the bar when Campo arrived and, after he downed a glass of ice-filled whisky down the hatch, offered us a room to rest—why, it was about 4:30 in the morning. But we said no. We told him we'd rather wait for the sunrise killing a bottle of whisky than snore away the yawning ticks of dawn.

"Fellas, I'm sorry," said Campo.

"What's there to be sorry for?" Boy said.

"Let's just drink," I said.

Anytime you meet a guy like Bobby Fischer in his suite at 4 in the morning—even if he was not exactly your type of host—that calls for a drink.

"Anyway, don't fret, dear fellas," Campo said. "This is not the end of the line."

"What do you mean?" Boy said.

"The interview is still on," Campo said.

"When? Where?" I asked. "Don't tell me we'll do it this time in the midnight hour."

"Oh, no, calm down, fellas," said Campo. "We are going to a faraway place, to a beach resort named Sicogon Island. How does that sound to you?"

Ummm. Romblon, you mean, in the land of marbles?

"When?" asked Boy.

"Two days from now," Campo said. "Bobby Fischer picked that place himself."

"How do we get there?" I asked. "Is there an airport there?"

"We'll ride on a luxury boat," said Campo. "Bobby Fischer himself will be aboard that boat."

Hearing that, Boy and I winked at each other. We next found ourselves drinking faster than usual. Even before the sun could rise, Johnnie Walker had been killed.

Two days later, Boy and I, attired in Hawaiian shirts and shorts, beach sandals and all, were on board this luxury boat. We were drinking beer in the midday sun, enjoying the vista of the open seas leaning on the railings of the upper deck, sniffing salty breeze, when Campo came to us. By the look in his eyes, I could sense that something had gone wrong. Again.

"Bad news," he said. "Bobby Fischer is not with us. He decided at the last minute to skip the trip."

I almost dropped my beer bottle into the sea.

"I did my best, fellas," Campo said. "Let's just enjoy the trip. We can't go back now. We are in the middle of nowhere. Let's treat this as our long-overdue R & R."

Well, Campo was right. Why cry over spilled milk? For the next three days, we had the ball of our lives.

And the interview with Fischer?

It's still on. When it's going to be held, only Bobby Fischer knows.

Sharapova gets boot in 'Rogers'

MONTREAL—Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova was eliminated from the Rogers Cup on Thursday, losing, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, to Vera Zvonareva.

Sharapova was outworked in the duel between baseline hitters, losing for the second time in two tournaments to a fellow Russian since her Wimbledon triumph.

The 10th-seeded Zvonareva advanced to Friday's quarterfinals to face another teenage sensation, 16-year-old Tatiana Golovin of France, who downed unseeded Gisela Dulko of Argentina, 6-7 (0-7), 6-3, 6-4.

In other matches, former champions Amelie Mauresmo and Jennifer Capriati advanced to the quarterfinals.

Mauresmo, who beat Capriati in the 2002 final, overcame 14th-seeded Elena Bovina of Russia, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 to reach the quarterfinal round for the third straight year.

Capriati, the No. 5 seed who won the tournament in 1991 as a 15-year-old, beat Mary Pierce, 6-2, 6-4, in a match between former Australian and French Open champions. *AP*

Carter, Peja ask for trade

NEW YORK—Vince Carter has four years left on his contract with the Toronto Raptors, but the five-time NBA All-Star may not be with the team for that long.

It has been widely rumored that Carter is interested in the New York Knicks, and his agent told the Daily News of New York that Carter asked the Raptors to deal him.

CARTER (left) and Stojakovic are no longer happy with their current teams.

Carter, who averaged 22.5 points last season, was reportedly angry the team didn't consult him on the hiring of general manager Rob Babcock and coach Sam Mitchell, who replaced Kevin O'Neill after the Raptors missed the playoffs for the second consecutive season.

If he is dealt, Carter would be among the recent NBA stars who have forced management to make the move. With one year left on their contracts, Shaquille O'Neal and Tracy McGrady lobbied hard for their trades to Miami and Houston, respectively.

Meanwhile, in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, three-time All-Star Peja Stojakovic has told the Sacramento Kings he wants to be traded from the only NBA team for which he has played.

"I think the change would be good for the team and for myself," Stojakovic told The Associated Press in a telephone interview on Thursday.

The NBA's second-leading scorer last season, Stojakovic has been with the Kings since entering the league in 1998. He was upset that the Kings lost Vlade Divac to the LA Lakers and feels it's time to move on. Stojakovic averaged 24.2 points and 6.3 rebounds last season. *AP*

Agassi enters last 8

CINCINNATI—Andre Agassi reached his first quarterfinal in five months with a revitalized performance that enabled him to overcome Juan Ignacio Chela, 6-3, 6-3, in the Masters Series on Thursday.

A former winner of all four grand slam titles built on his improved form of the previous round and struck the ball with more confidence and assertiveness than earlier in the year when he was bothered by a hip problem.

The 34-year-old 11th seed also moved much better than recently, enabling him to dictate the pattern against Chela and to repel for at least another day the continual talk of retirement.

The highlight of the match was the rally that took Agassi to break point on Chela's serve when leading 4-3 in the second set. *Reuters*

Stupples leader by one

VANIA, Ohio—Britain's Karen Stupples, coming off her first major title at last week's British Women's Open, fired a six-under par 65 here Thursday to grab a one-stroke lead after round one of the Jamie Farr Classic.

Stupples opened and closed the front nine with birdies and followed her lone bogey at the 16th with two birdies to lead the $1.1 million-LPGA event by a shot over 2003 winner Se Ri Pak of South Korea and American Meg Mallon.

Pak made birdies from 18 feet at the second and 22 feet at the third and dropped another 20-footer for birdie at the par-5 seventh before making the turn four-under thanks to a 14-footer at the ninth. *AFP*

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3	CATWOMAN
4	DEAD PEOPLE

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2	GARFIELD
3	COLLATERAL
4	CATWOMAN

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2	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
3	MEAN GIRLS
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5	ELLA ENCHANTED
6	THE CURSED
7	COLLATERAL
8	CATWOMAN

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4	COLLATERAL
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7	RESERVED
8	I, ROBOT

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3	IMELDA
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2
GARFIELD
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8:55/10:20 LFS/
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2 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL R-13 / FS : 11:20 PM, 2:00 PM, 4:40 PM, 7:20 PM, LMF : 10:00 PM
3 (DOLBY)	CATWOMAN FS : 12:50 PM, 3:05 PM, 5:20 PM, 7:35 PM, LMF : 9:50 PM
4 (DOLBY)	SOON TO OPEN

PREMIERE

(DOLBY)	COLLATERAL R-13 / FS : 10:45 AM, 1:25 PM, 4:05 PM, 6:45 PM, LMF : 9:25 PM

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3	MAKAMUDO
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8	RESERVE
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2	COLLATERAL
3	CATWOMAN

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3	GARFIELD
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5	MAKAMUDO

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3	I - ROBOT
4	KING ARTHUR
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6	GARFIELD

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2	

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6 GOLD (SDDS)	COLLATERAL
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7 (Dolby)	ETERNAL SUNSHINE

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4	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

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3 (DOLBY)	CATWOMAN
4 (DTS)	GARFIELD

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4 (DTS)	I - ROBOT

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2 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL
3 (DOLBY)	GARFIELD
4 (DOLBY)	CATWOWAN

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2 (DTS)	PRINCE & ME
3 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL
4	CATWOMAN

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3 (DTS)	CATWOMAN
4	WEREWOLF (GINGER SNAP-2)

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3 (DOLBY)	I - ROBOT

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2	PRINCE & ME
3 (DOLBY)	KING ARTHUR
4 (DTS)	I - ROBOT

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3327

1	I - ROBOT
2	ALONG CAME POLLY
3 (DOLBY)	CATWOMAN

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

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2	MAKAMUNDO
3	IMELDA
4 (DTS)	100 GIRLS

Lianas MovieCity
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1 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL
2	IMELDA
3 (DTS)	CATWOMAN
4	PRINCE & ME
5	WEREWOLF (GINGER SNAP - 2)

Mega Center Mall
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1	RESERVED
2	KILL BILL - 2
3 (DTS)	CATWOMAN
4 (DOLBY)	RESERVED

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2	ALONG CAME POLLY
3	AROUND THE WORLD
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PBA logs on to Mozcom

MOZCOM recently signed up the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) for the management and maintenance of its online presence. It will be maintaining the popular www.pba.ph website and extending it to mobile phone users through WAP, MMS and SMS. This joint venture will allow PBA supporters to access the latest information on the league from different devices. "We are very excited to be working with an institution like the PBA," said Dick Chiang, Mozcom's COO/CTO. "The PBA is glad to partner with Mozcom, in an effort to improve and enhance our Internet presence. Their expertise will undoubtedly help us in our desire to make the PBA experience complete," PBA Commissioner Noli Eala said. Recently, Mozcom and the PBA embarked on a historic event. For the first time, a PBA game, Game 4 of the Fiesta Conference championship, was broadcasted live on the Internet in cooperation with ABC Sports. The game was viewed by fans worldwide from Singapore, to North America, and to the Middle East.

Pagcor PIM derby set

A TOTAL of P1 million is at stake when Pagcor-Casino Filipino Parañaque and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 unveil the Annual Las Piñas 6-Stag Derby on Aug. 24 and 26 at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. The stagfest has an entry fee of P15,000. The champions will receive two brand-new motorcycles. Bonus bet certificates from CF-Parañaque will also be given to participants. Screening of stags is every Saturday and Sunday, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the LPC office. Stags banded by NCA, Ucap, GF-Ban, NGBA, Migba, B-Cup and LGBA are automatically accepted. Stags will be bracketed into four classifications to ensure fair matching of entries during the event. For other inquiries, call 873-1040 and 874-3910 or 09205609404. Meanwhile, the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) will stage a 5-Stag derby on Sept. 6 and every Monday thereafter. Seven derbies will determine the 2004 Stagfighter of the Year winner.

Fowl seminar resumes

THE FIRST-EVER All About Gamecock seminar, hosted by the Luzon Gamefowl Breeders Association, resumes today at the Sulo Hotel in Quezon City. The event is expected to draw 150 participants and comes at the heels of a Thunderbird Party last night thrown by gamefowl industry leader Thunderbird Power Feeds. Those who already spoke about their gamefowl experiences were popular media personality Jay Sonza (LGBA's Breeder of the Year), National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders president Ricoy Palmares, Jessie Ledesma of the Panay Gamefowl Breeders Association and Negros Gamefowl Breeders Association's top man Juancho Aguirre. Meanwhile, Boy de Vera recently won the 5-Stag Arthur Uy Derby at Matina Gallera Coliseum in Davao City. De Vera, who is based in Sultan Kudarat, was once featured as Breeder of the Week in the cockfighting program Tukaan.

Paragua gains tie for third

FILIPINO GM-candidate Mark Paragua settled for a draw with IM Aurelien Dunis of France in the fourth round and then bested Ante Jurkovic of Croatia in the fifth to gain a tie for the third to ninth places in the XI Nice International Open Chess Tournament Thursday night at the Grand Aston Hotel in Nice, France.

Paragua now has 4.0 points, the same output of compatriots IM Ronald Bancod and NM-candidate Roland Salvador, Dunis, GM Nenad Sulava of Croatia, GM Miroljub Lazic of Yugoslavia and IM Arthur Abolianin of Belgium.

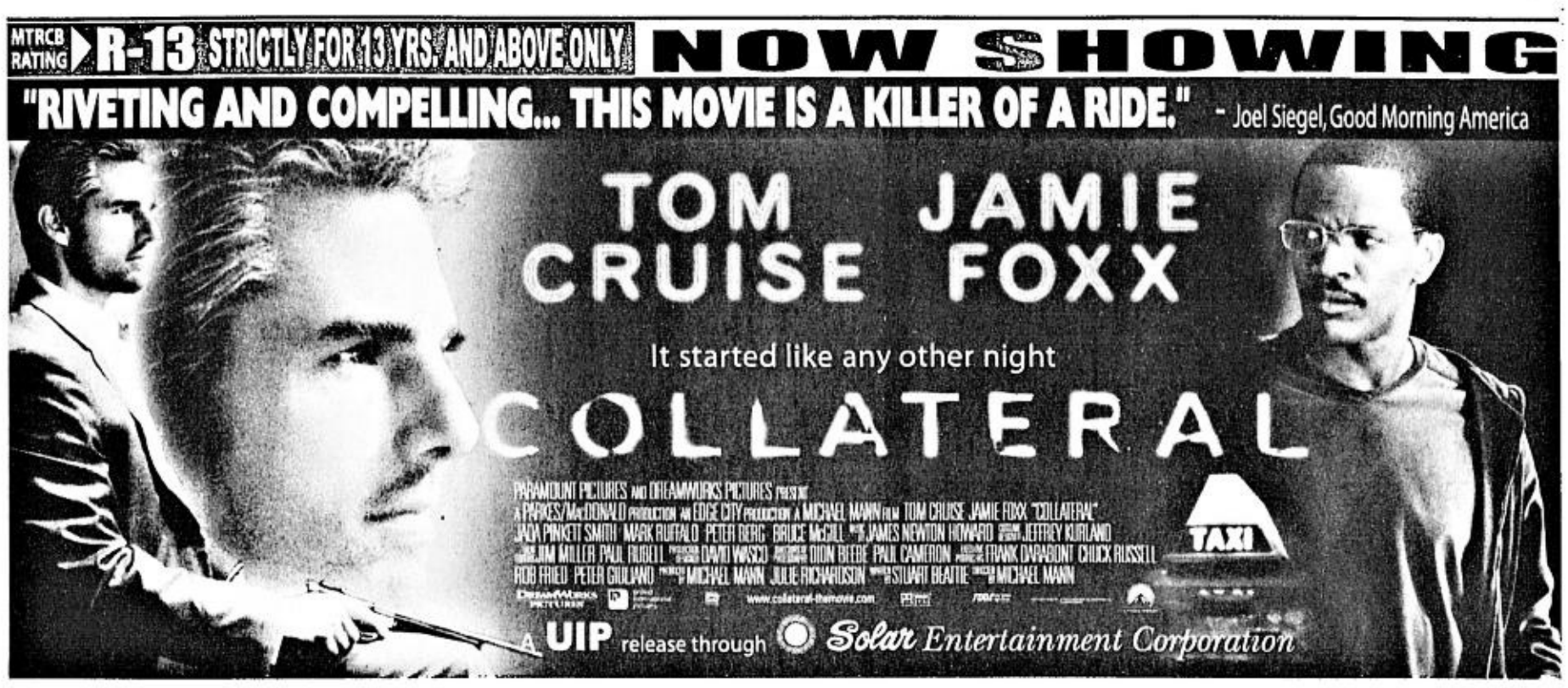
Meanwhile, Filipino IM Jayson Gonzales forced a draw with second seed GM Evgeniy Solozhenkin of Russia in the fourth round of the XXX Badalona International Open Chess Championships Thursday at the Club Escacs Sant Josep De Badalona in Barcelona, Spain.

The 12th-ranked Gonzales improved his record to 3.5 points. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Ex-chess champ Fischer renouncing US citizenship

TOKYO—Former world chess champion Bobby Fischer, wanted by Washington for defying sanctions on Yugoslavia, plans to renounce his US citizenship, a lawyer working his appeal against deportation from Japan said on Friday.

Fischer, one of the chess world's great eccentrics, was detained at Tokyo's Narita airport last month when he tried to leave for Manila on a passport US officials say was invalid. *Reuters*



Japanese top Pony Baseball

SHOGO Iha, a 5-foot-4, 14-year-old from Okinawa, scattered four hits as Japan blanked Chinese Taipei, 2-0, yesterday to win the 30th Asia-Pacific Zone Pony Baseball championship at the Rizal diamond.

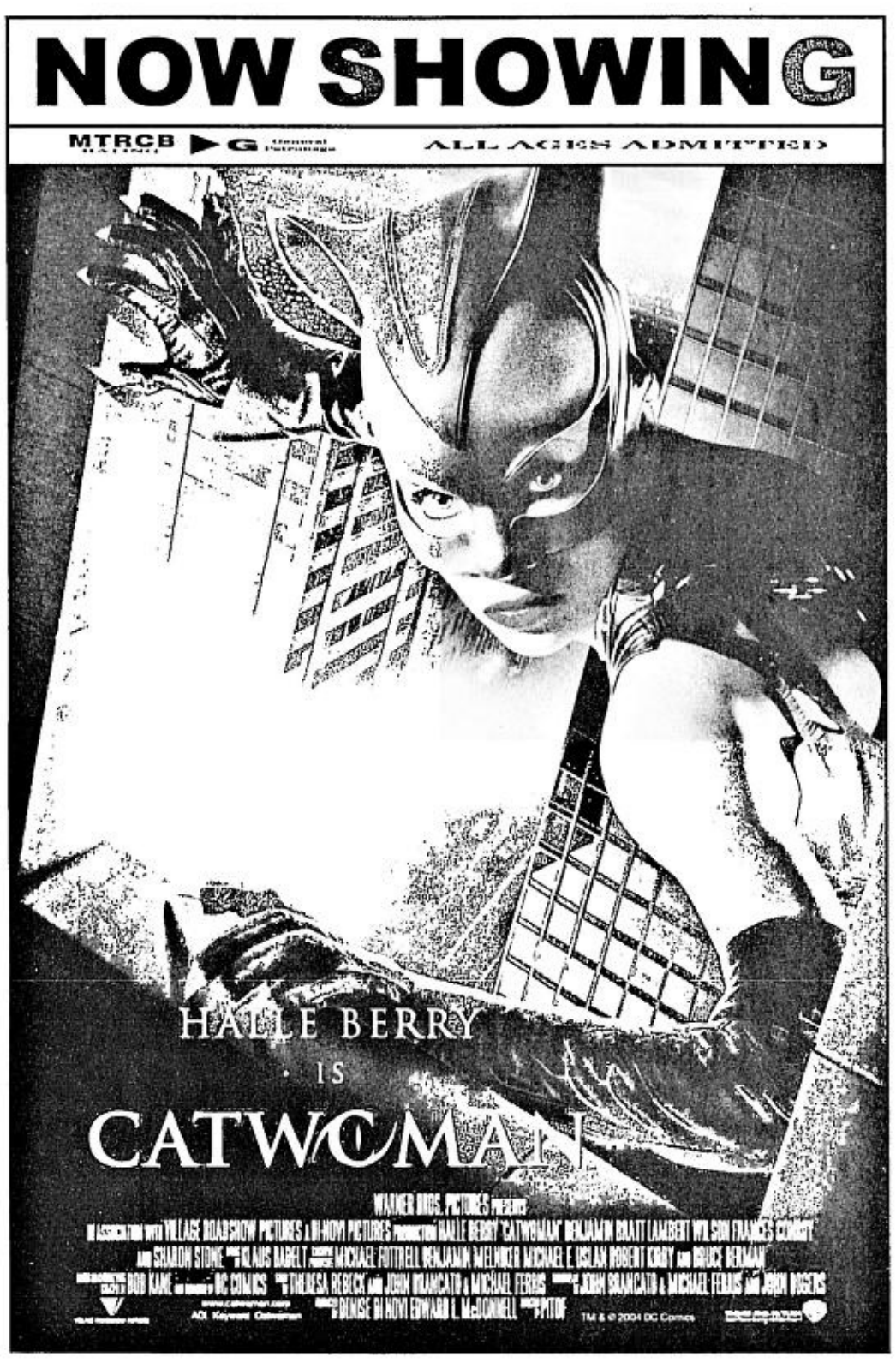
The tiny pitcher struck out seven in a no-relief job to lead Japan to the Pony Baseball World Series in the US later this year.

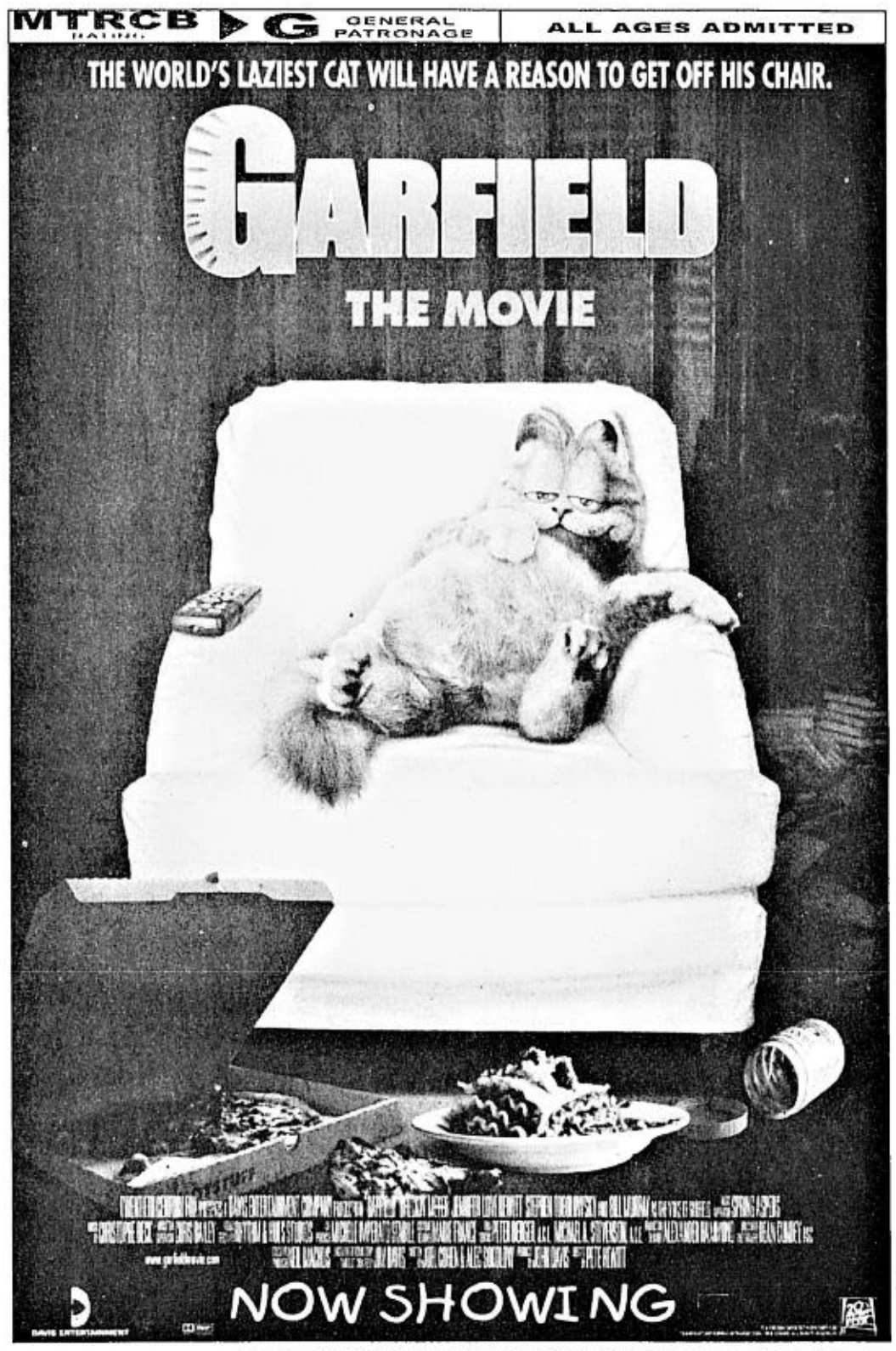
Iha won the battle on the mound against Chih Sheng-Yang when third baseman Taira Hideaki hit a two-run single to centerfield that sent Shogo Shimabukuro and Tsubasa Koja home on top of the seventh.

"He is a small guy, but I trust him because of his very good control," said Japan coach Satoshi Ishikawa.

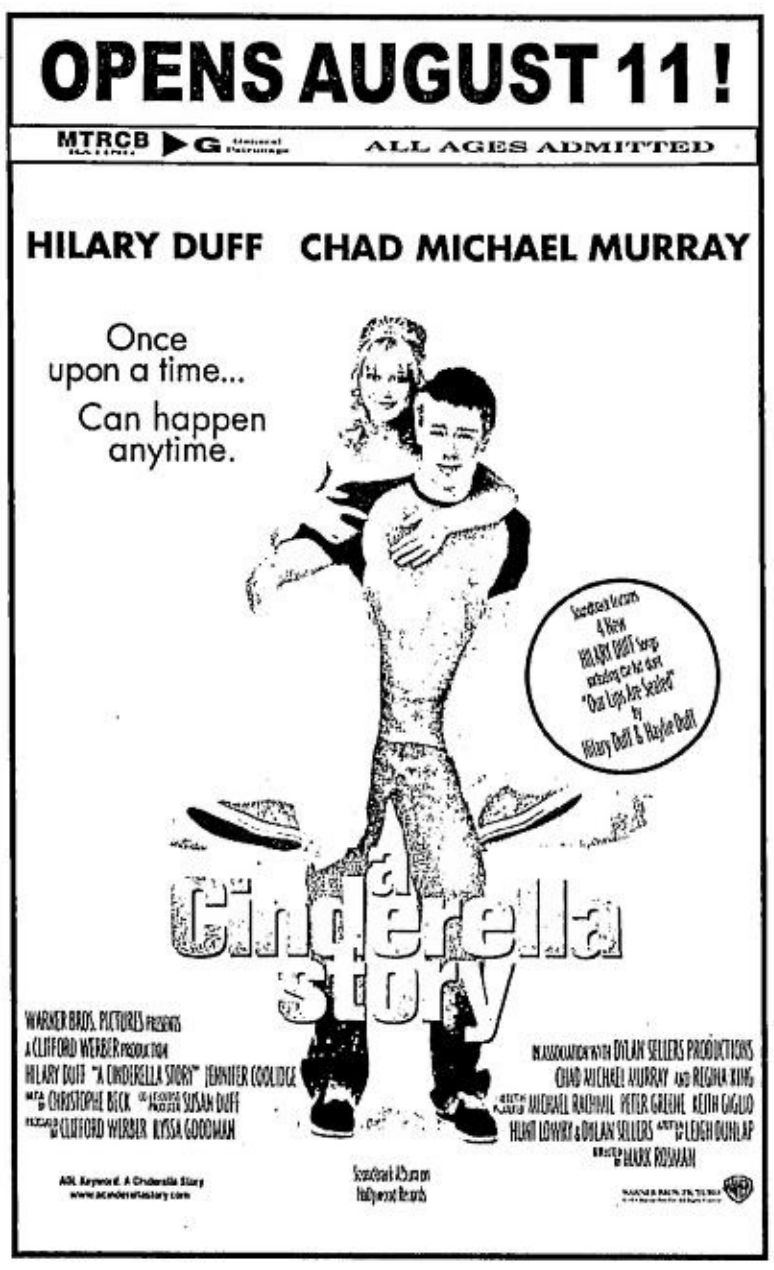
After Shimabukuro's key hit, Iha retired the Taiwanese in order.

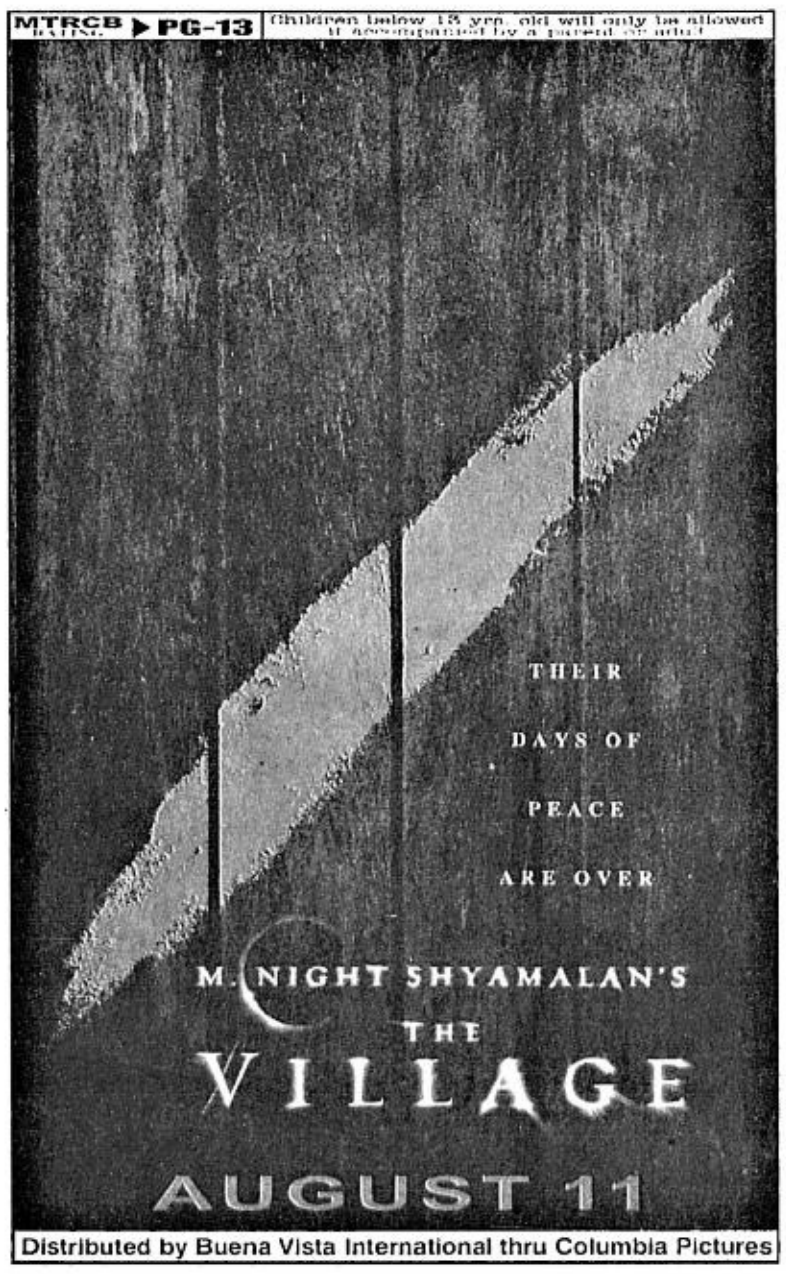
Team Philippines finished dead-last in the four-team field after being mangled by Korea, 13-1, Thursday. *Musong Castillo*

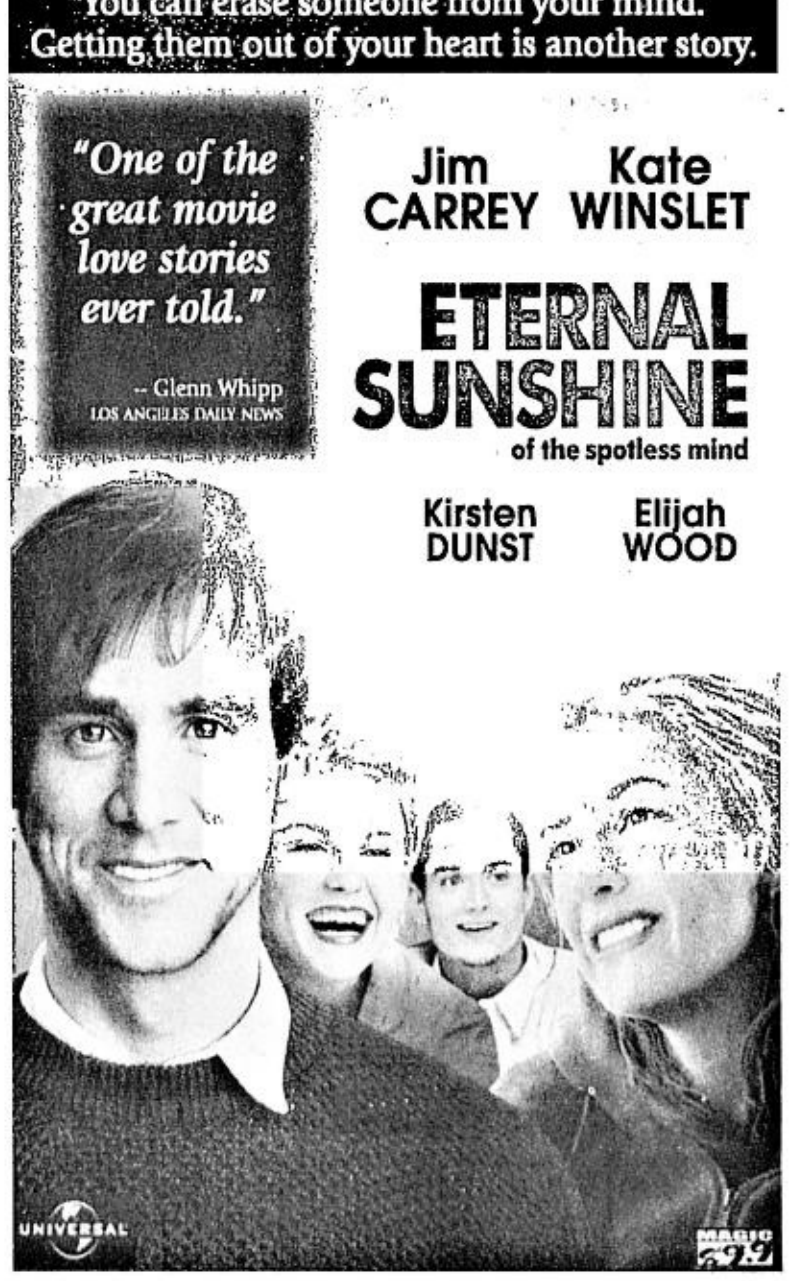




More movies on page B11.







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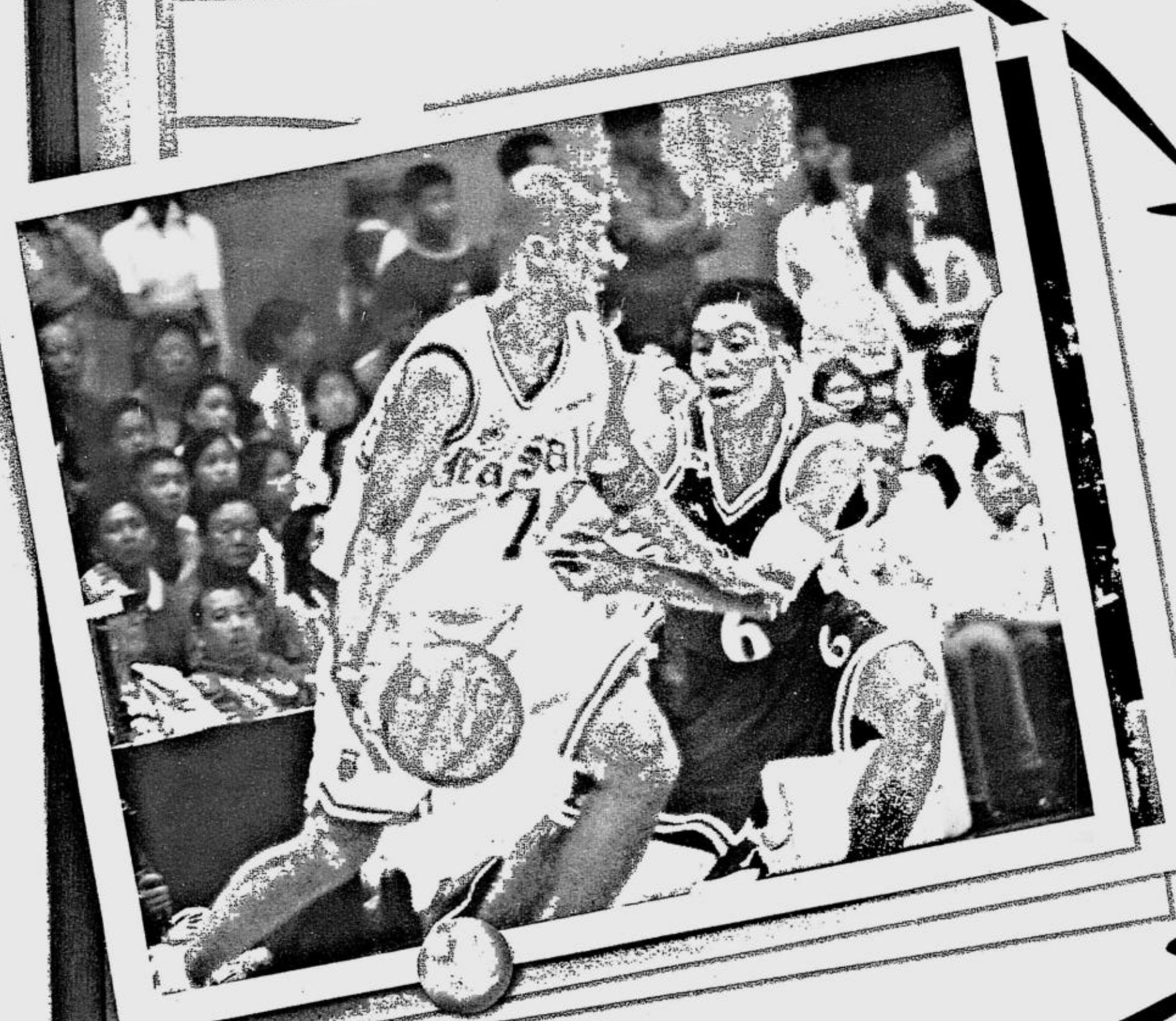

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Forex reserves dip to 5-month low

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S gross international reserves dipped to a five-month low of $15.99 billion due to the debt-servicing requirements of the national government and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The end-July GIR marked a 1.2-percent decline from the end-June level of $16.18 billion. It was likewise lower than the $16.1 billion in reserves during the same period last year.

This brought the BSP's net international reserves as of end-July—inclusive of revaluation of reserve assets and reserve-related liabilities—to $13.78 billion or about $93 million lower than the end-June level of $13.88 billion.

BSP Officer-in-Charge Armando Suratos said that despite the decline in the GIR, the current level was still above the target of $14-$15 billion for the full year.

"The July GIR level was adequate to cover about 4.4 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of services and income," Suratos said.

"This level was also equivalent to 2.2 times the country's short-term debt based on original maturity and 1.3 times based on residual maturity," Suratos said.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to outstanding short-term external debt on original maturity plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans of the public and private sectors falling due within the next 12 months.

Based on the BSP's data, there was $223.94 million worth of original maturity and $131.13 million in residual maturity during the month of July.

Suratos said the outflow from public sector debt servicing last month was partly offset by inflow from the national government's deposit with the BSP of proceeds from the reopening of its $250-million global bond issue.

The government raised 350 million euros last month for its debt refinancing, the largest euro-denominated transaction in Asia so far this year. The fund-raising was done through the reopening of the 9.125-percent eurobond facility due Feb. 22, 2010, because of robust investor appetite for the offering.

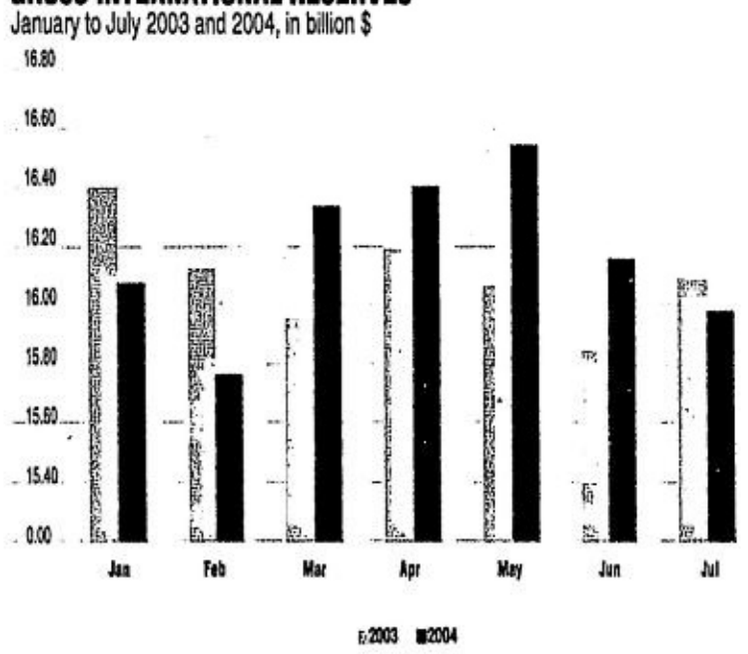
While the government targeted only a minimum of 200 million euros from the transaction, it received orders in excess of 700 million euros within a 24-hour marketing period. This brought the total outstanding amount of the eurobond facility to 650 million euros.

The bonds were sold to investors at a re-offer price of 103.25 or at a re-offer yield of 8.35 percent, the DOF said.

Proceeds from the transaction will be used primarily to refinance the government's 350 million eurobonds falling due this September.

Meanwhile, the projected GIR level by year's end was much lower than the $16.86-billion level posted as of end-2003.

GROSS INTERNATIONAL RESERVES
January to July 2003 and 2004, in billion $



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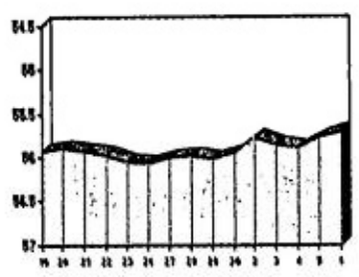

₱55.715 : $1
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¥111.62 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 6, 2004

GOLD: $391.70-392.20
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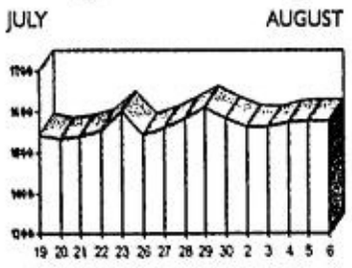
STOCK MARKET

Shares end higher on bargain-hunting

THE MAIN stock index closed slightly higher yesterday, as bargain-hunters bought blue-chip Globe Telecom and other select stocks following recent losses, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 4.89 points, or 0.3 percent, to close at 1,577.80, adding to Wednesday's 0.7-percent rise.

Prior to Wednesday's gain, the index gave up 2.3 percent in three straight sessions. *Reuters*



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Group backs scrapping of cement duty

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE JAPANESE Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines Inc. yesterday hailed a Supreme Court decision voiding the safeguard measure on imported cement, saying this would assure competitive prices in the local market.

The JCCIPI said in a statement the ruling would also result to an increase in the construction of much needed infrastructure all over the country.

This would, in turn, support the government's development agenda, the group added.

In 2001, the Department of Trade and Industry imposed safeguard duties of P20.60 for every 40-kilogram bag of cement after the Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp. (Philcemcor) complained that rising imports, particularly by Japanese-owned Southern Cross Cement Corp., had resulted in decreased market share for local players.

Southern Cross' major stockholders include Teiheiyo Cement Corp. and Tokuyama Corp., which are considered the largest cement makers in Japan.

In a decision issued last July 8, the High Court said the law required that the Tariff Commission should first make a positive and final determination of importation hurting the local industry before a safeguard duty could be put in place.

The TC had concluded that Southern Cross' imports of Portland cement posed no threat of serious injury to the local cement industry, but the DTI went ahead with the safeguard duties.

Southern Cross brought the case to the Court of Appeals, which granted Philcemcor's request

GROUP/ B2

Neda says new taxes necessary

By Michelle V. Remo

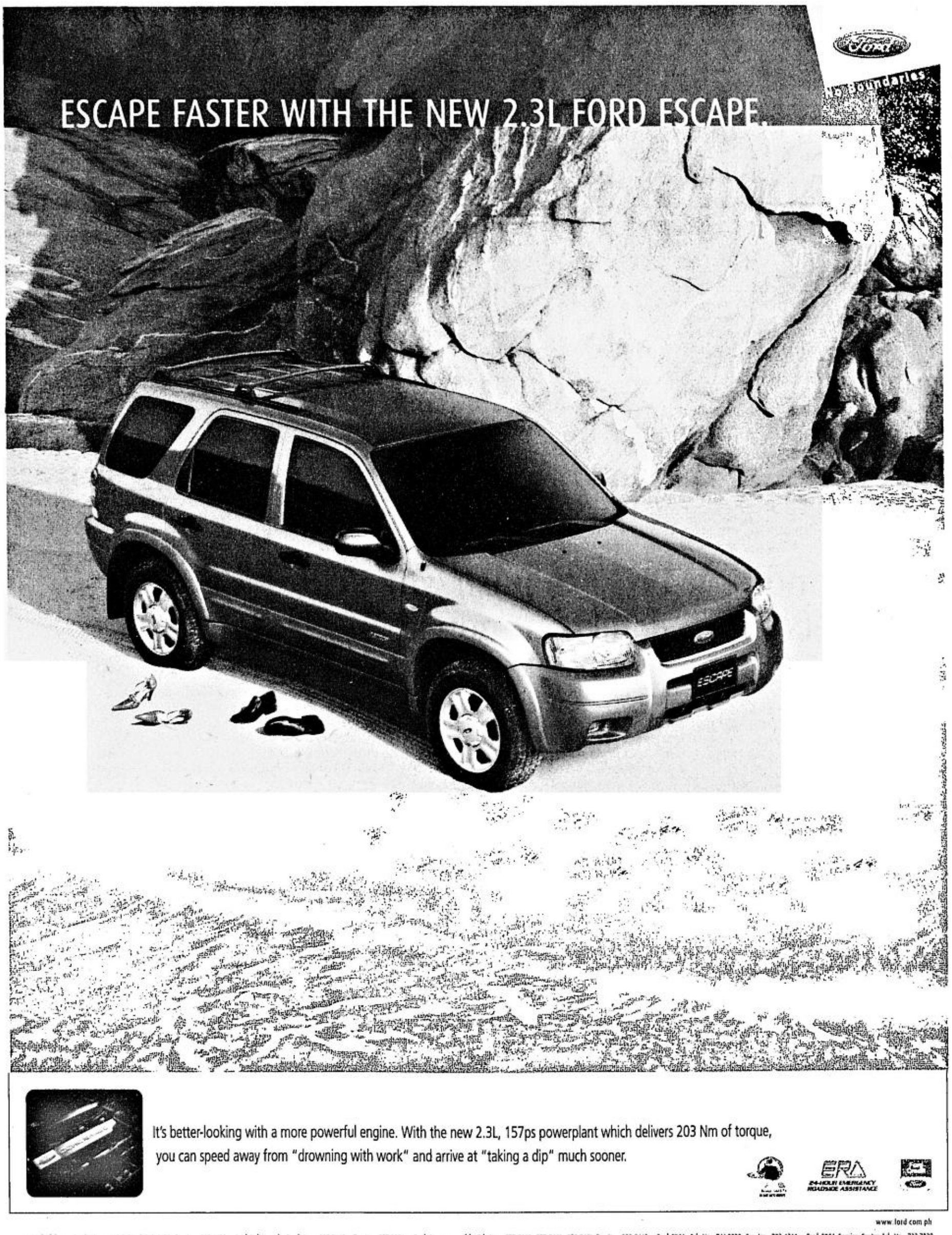
THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority (Neda) yesterday said the government's tax measures were necessary as the additional resources from the proposed new taxes are vital in helping the Philippines achieve its millennium development goals.

Neda Director General Romulo Neri said in a statement that additional revenue from the tax measures, estimated at about P80 billion a year, was needed to push programs on poverty reduction, access to safe and clean water, and to education, and reducing child mortality rates.

Neri said the Philippines was on track to meeting the United Nation's standards on poverty alleviation, education, child caring and water services. "However, unless there are resources that are allocated for these goals, it would be hard to achieve them."

The Neda earlier completed the new Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP), which contains that country's development targets for the next six years.

The MTPDP covers five areas of development, namely macroeconomic stability anchored on fiscal and financial strength, job creation through global competitiveness, social development and direct anti-poverty measures, decentralized development, and good governance and national harmony.



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Case and tell

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

CHIEF Justice Hilario Davide, according to reports, did not like the tone of Malacañang, when its spokesperson criticized the judiciary for meddling into economic policy.

For a long time now, business has been having problems with the way the Supreme Court rules on cases coming its way, particularly those dealing big blows to the economy, such as cancellation of infrastructure contracts.

Just the other day, Secretary Ignacio Bunye, presidential spokesperson, did a little kiss-and-tell thing. He hit the Court of Appeals for ruling against the rate increase which the executive branch, through the ERC, or the Energy Regulatory Commission, granted to Meralco.

Reacting to the Malacañang sniping, Davide said that the Supreme Court ruled only on cases regarding the Constitution, period. And that's it, boss? Honest?

* * *

ALSO the other day, former Solicitor General Frank Chavez filed a case before the Supreme Court, involving another land reclamation project in Manila Bay.

That's the one near the garbage dump called Smokey Mountain. Doing the reclamation is the R-II Builders, which is owned by Regis Romero.

By the way, Romero was one of the hostages taken by the Abu Sayyaf from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan, together with another ... well, that's a bit too private.

Anyway, as if to test the defense of the Chief Justice against the Malacañang tirade, Frank Chavez asked the Supreme Court to scrap the R-II Builders reclamation.

For what reason, pray tell? What else—Chavez said that the project was UNconstitutional. This should make Davide sit up! Good timing, Frank, for this case and tell!

* * *

INTERESTINGLY, Chavez also filed a case—and won—against another reclamation project in Manila, involving the listed Cyberbay, formerly Amari.

Chavez originally only wanted to get the commission of his clients in the infamous Amari-PEA reclamation deal. He did not ask the court to cancel the deal.

But the Supreme Court went ahead to declare the Amari-PEA contract null and void, anyway, without much ado, thank you.

It simply applied the full force of the Constitution. Or more precisely, how the Supreme Court actually understood, in its own way, the full force of the Constitution!

* * *

SOME arguments of the Supreme Court in the ruling on the Cyberbay case were not in the Chavez petition. Not even, er "suggested," boss? Not even imagined!

In a brilliant move, Chavez now uses the same arguments volunteered by the Supreme Court in the Cyberbay case, this time for the R-II Builders reclamation.

Bear in mind that Chavez won the Cyberbay case. That case was exactly the same as the R-II Builders' case.

Now we'll see if the Supreme Court has a little ... well, what do they call it in basketball? Consistency?

* * *

AS a background, the R-II Builders reclamation project started as a housing project during the time of Tita Cory.

At that time, to clean up the high profile dumpsite in Balut—i.e. Smokey Mountain—she tasked the government firm NHA to build low-cost houses there.

But the government did not have the money, and so the dream project remained just that—a dream. Until of course, the go-go-go Kuya Eddie came to the rescue.

During the time of Kuya Eddie, the project ended up with a private company. Rightly or wrongly, the awardee for the project, Romero himself, was perceived to be close to Kuya Eddie.

The government would not have to spend a centavo, R-II Builders would take care of everything. The government would just do nothing. Fair enough!

In exchange, R-II builders would be allowed to reclaim about 40 hectares of land in Manila Bay. Fair enough!

* * *

BUT, wait a minute! Much later, the government contract with R-II Builders had to be changed several times, favoring R-II Builders, of course.

It turned out that R-II Builders could not raise the money to finance the whole thing, and so it had to run to the government for help.

Based on the Chavez petition, ending up with exposure in the project were the SSS with more than P1 billion, Owwa with P835 million, Home Guarantee Corp. with P350 million, PNB with P300 million, and Land Bank with P124 million.

Now, to defend the involvement of the government outfits, R-II Builders kept on arguing that they did not provide cash for the project.

They only provided "assets" into the pool which R-II Builders used to raise money for the project. By the way, R-II Builders still has to finish the project.

* * *

IN the contract, the government also gave R-II Builders the right over a "commercial-industrial" area in Smokey Mountain.

Originally, the area would cover some 1.3 hectares. Much later, perhaps thanks to a miracle from above, the area was expanded to 2.3 hectares.

Moreover, the original reclamation area was only 40 hectares. Later, maybe through another divine intervention, R-II Builders was able to get 119 hectares more. All in all, the contract underwent three amendments, all favorable to R-II Builders, of course.

It seems that our government can change its mind regarding a business deal, much faster than Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago can change sides in politics.

* * *

BECAUSE of the "big success" of the Smokey Mountain project, as claimed by the Ramos administration, Kuya Eddie gave an advice to the man named Band ... Wrist Band. Wrist Band should take care of the Payatas dumpsite. Fair enough?

As if the miracles of the contract changes were not enough, R-II Builders also ended up owning a big part of the reclamation called Harbour Centre.

The 10-hectare land used by Harbour Centre actually came from the "asset pool" which had government outfits as investors.

It was worth P1.75 billion. The "pool" got shares in Harbour Centre worth only P600 million. R-II Builders then was able to dilute the equity of the government "pool."

R-II Builders simply converted its "expenses for the project into equity in Harbour Centre, diluting the government equity. Fair enough!

* * *

NOW the Supreme Court thinking in the Cyberbay case was that it was out to correct a wrong. It was another "activist" ruling for the Supreme Court.

To rule against Cyberbay, the Supreme Court found justification in the Constitution that, actually, no corporation can own lands of public domain.

Chavez used the same argument in his case against the R-II Builders reclamation. The question is, will the Constitution apply equally to everybody? We'll see!

SEC approves Amla guidelines

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) has approved the proposed guidelines that would instruct regulated companies how to revise their respective handbooks to stamp out money laundering practices.

Regulated companies on or before Oct. 29 should submit to the SEC their respective revised operating manuals in line with the changes introduced to the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001.

Those who have already revised and amended their manuals need only to inform the SEC of the latest filing.

Those who fail to submit their revised handbooks will be fined P500 for each day of delay.

Regulated companies include brokers, dealers, investment houses, mutual fund companies, common trust fund companies, pre-need firms and financing companies.

According to the SEC, the anti-money laundering operating manual outlines policies on customer identification, record keeping, suspicious transactions, report requirements, internal control and procedures, compliance and training.

The SEC stressed that the regulated firms must know their customers to prevent money laundering practices. The firms are instructed to obtain satisfactory proof of the customer's identity and ensure that effective procedures for verifying the identity of new customers are in place.

One of the amendments introduced in the guidelines is the verification of accounts without face-to-face contact. Customer identification procedures for non face-to-face verification should be as stringent as those applied in face-to-face verification. Whenever possible, prospective clients should be interviewed personally, according to the guidelines.

To check customer identities without personal interviews, companies are instructed to independently verify home or business numbers for telephone interviews. Subject to the applicant's consent, the company can also confirm via telephone the applicant's employment with the personnel department of his employer at a listed business number.

The company can also turn to recent bank statements, income tax returns or other such documents to check details of the applicant's income or salary. The firm may confirm the applicant's address through correspondence.

For those living outside the country and who wish to open accounts without face-to-face contact, they are required to submit their passports, birth certificates, driver's licenses, employment identification cards or incorporation and partnership papers for corporate accounts, authenticated by the Philippine Consulate.

Ayala bond issue gets top rating

AYALA Corp.'s proposed P5-billion bond issuance has received a rating of "PRS Aaa," indicating that the bonds "have the smallest degree of investment risk," according to the Philippine Rating Services Corp. (PhilRatings).

In a statement, PhilRatings said that the appraisal shows that the interest payments are protected "by a large or by an exceptionally stable margin" while "the principal is secured."

In assigning the rating, PhilRatings cited the company's "diversified portfolio of businesses with well-established markets, its strong financial flexibility anchored mainly on its investments or holdings in publicly listed companies, increasing dividend streams from subsidiaries and affiliates, and the company's committed shareholders."

PhilRatings also said that while Ayala Corp.'s present level of debt is seen as "moderately aggressive" at P60 billion as of year-end 2003, PhilRatings favors the company's plans to replace a portion of its dollar borrowings maturing in 2005 with the proposed peso issue.

The ratings firm said this reduces the company's exposure to foreign exchange risk and partly addresses refinancing needs in the short- to medium-term.

PhilRatings said that as of mid-July 2004, the market value of Ayala Corp.'s shares in its property arm Ayala Land Inc., its mobile phone operator Globe Telecom Inc., and Bank of the Philippine Islands, amounted to P112.4 billion.

The company also has close to P6 billion in cash and $140 million in undrawn, committed credit facilities which can cover its maturing obligations up to next year.

Total debt of the company and its units less current portion of liabilities stood at P54 billion as of end-2003. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PLDT to push with sale of 767M Piltel common shares to Smart

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BOARD of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has approved the sale of 767 million common shares it holds in Pilipino Telephone Corp. to Smart Communications Inc. at 20.5 centavos each, according to company officials.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said that the company would sell the Piltel common shares at the same price as the 59.3 million preferred shares it had sold last month.

"The common shares will be sold also at 20.5 centavos per share," said Pangilinan. "On a fully diluted basis, this is the value of Piltel now."

Napoleon Nazareno, PLDT president, said that there would be no change in control of Piltel even if PLDT would sell the stocks to Smart.

"The board has approved the sale of the common shares," said Nazareno, also the president of Smart and chair of Piltel. "(The sale) would be held sometime in September. This would be part of the second stage of the equity transaction between Smart and Piltel."

Piltel shares yesterday closed at P2.40, placing the value of the transaction between PLDT and Smart only at about 8.5 percent of the current market price.

"On a stand alone basis, the value of Piltel is about 20 centavos per share," said Nazareno. "You have to bear in mind that Smart is the one adding value to Piltel, so why should we pay for the value that we ourselves are adding."

Smart is buying 92 percent of Piltel from PLDT. The equity transaction comes in two stages; one is the purchase of 59 million Series K convertible preferred shares equivalent to about 47 percent, to be followed with the acquisition of 767 million common shares equivalent to about 45 percent.

PLDT had agreed to sell the Series K block at P2.066 billion. The common shares are on-

PLDT/B3

EPHI posts 19% profit growth

MALL and hotel lessor Edsa Properties and Holdings Inc. (EPHI) said its net profit rose 19 percent to P138 million in the first six months ending June, driven by growth in the rental income from the company's mall.

In its financial report to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), EPHI said rental earnings from Shangri-La Plaza Mall along Edsa climbed 8 percent, while rental income from Edsa Shangri-la Hotel rose 11.7 percent to P27 million, from P24.2 million in 2003.

Expenses dropped P13 million or 5.9 percent to P206.8 million from P219.8 million due to a P16.3-million reduction in depreciation and amortization expenses.

Higher loan balance, however, pushed up interest expenses, offsetting the decline in depreciation and amortization expenses.

Shangri-La Plaza's rental earnings rose to P283.3 million from P262.2 million. Occupancy rate stood at 97 percent boosted by the performance of its restaurants along Internal Avenue, and the full occupancy and improved sales of retail outlets on "the 5th."

The partial completion of the mall's cinema renovation in June further added to the growth.

Three of the Shang Cineplex's five theaters were opened in June, while the remaining two theaters were opened this month. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 6, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	39,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	41	41	40.5	41	19,100
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	39.5	39.5	39.5	8,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.48	150,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26	25.5	26	54,300
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	20,500
Security Bank Corp.	20.75	20.75	20.5	20.75	146,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	900
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2200	2200	2200	2200	50
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1500	1500	1500	1500	80
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20.25	20.25	20	20.25	11,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.66	0.67	0.66	0.67	900,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	895	895	875	885	253,120
Ipeople Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.46	310,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	2,200,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.44	2.46	2.38	2.4	22,409,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1275	1285	1270	1280	235,780
Ivantage Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	210,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	9,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	145,300
Manila Electric Co. B	21.75	22	21.25	21.25	1,388,800
Petron Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.7	2.75	1,045,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2	2	2	2	15,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	6,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	300,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	300,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	30,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.37	0.4	0.37	0.38	770,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.72	1.74	420,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	14,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	30	30	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	25.5	26	25.5	26	540,900
RFM Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.76	0.76	280,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	56.5	57	105,700
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	68.5	68.5	68.5	1,500
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,800
Universal Robina Corp.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	246,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	40,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	21,000,000
Ayala Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	4,106,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.27	0.32	210,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.05	3.1	3.05	3.1	48,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	4,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	400,000
APC Group Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.006	103,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.02	1.02	1	1	131,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	24.25	25	24.25	25	15,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.14	0.165	2,200,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.49	9,440,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	1,800,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.18	1.02	1.16	10,612,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.031	0.032	0.031	0.032	4,000,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,000
F&J Princ.e Holdings Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23	23	22.5	22.75	665,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	1,300,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	10,000
Ionics Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.12	122,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	235,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.6	1,014,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	1,310,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	3,400,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	22,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	1,410,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	8,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.4	30,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	500,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.54	0.55	0.53	0.55	2,210,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	190,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	29,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	8,029,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	50,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.45	0.49	0.45	0.49	80,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	650,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.96	5,080,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	480,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	160,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2	2	2	2	10,000
SM Development Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	3,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6	6	5.9	6	33,541,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0036	0.004	0.0036	0.004	207,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3	3.2	3	3.2	100,000
Benguet Corp. A	1.18	1.22	1.18	1.2	68,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.24	0.2	0.235	32,040,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.245	0.29	0.245	0.29	12,280,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	422,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	260,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.0038	0.0044	0.0038	0.004	842,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.4	0.45	0.38	0.45	13,010,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.43	0.5	0.41	0.48	2,240,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.16	0.17	0.15	0.15	1,780,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0036	0.0038	0.0036	0.0038	76,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	23,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	440,000
Pacifica	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	1,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.2	170,000

CURRENCIES

August 6, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.828569	1.000000	55.8400
Japan	Yen	0.007417	0.008951	0.4998
United Kingdom	Pound	1.512056	1.824900	101.9024
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.106237	0.128217	7.1596
Switzerland	Franc	0.650471	0.785053	43.8374
Canada	Dollar	0.628895	0.759013	42.3833
Singapore	Dollar	0.480748	0.580215	32.3992
Australia	Dollar	0.583294	0.703977	39.3101
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.197913	2.652661	148.1246
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220952	0.266667	14.8907
Brunei	Dollar	0.479357	0.578536	32.3055
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000109	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.019999	0.024137	1.3478
UAE	Dirham	0.225590	0.272264	15.2032
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.206900	67.3933
Argentina	Peso	0.271662	0.327869	18.3082
Brazil	Real	0.271217	0.327332	18.2782
Denmark	Kroner	0.134517	0.162348	9.0655
India	Rupee	0.017881	0.021580	1.2050
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218050	0.263165	14.6951
Mexico	New Peso	0.072503	0.087504	4.8862
New Zealand	Dollar	0.534526	0.645120	36.0235
Norway	Kroner	0.119822	0.144613	8.0752
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014164	0.017094	0.9545
South Africa	Rand	0.132730	0.160192	8.9451
Korea	Won	0.000713	0.000860	0.0480
Sweden	Kroner	0.108796	0.131306	7.3321
Syria	Pound	0.020209	0.024390	1.3619
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024355	0.029394	1.6414
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000433	0.000522	0.0291

DISCLOSURES

GLOBE Telecom Inc. clarified that news reports saying the income of the company could hit P14.7 billion if it could sustain the trend during the second quarter did not come from Globe representatives but from analysts.

* * *

SQL*WIZARD Inc. declared that the dividend payment date will be on Sept. 14.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications appointed Ralph Nubia Jr. as executive director for corporate banking and branch lending, Carlos Chung Bunsit as executive director and segment head-in-charge of credit management, Henry Uy as executive director for Trust group and Ernesto Luy as executive director in-charge of oversight functions for treasury, facilities management division and branch expansion programs. ***Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

Group backs . . .

From page B1

and upheld the safeguard duty. The matter was then elevated to the Supreme Court.

Last month, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said the DTI would exhaust all legal means to push for the duty and would ask the High Court to reconsider its decision.

Purisima said the Safeguard Measures Law or Republic Act No. 8800 provides that the DTI secretary, with respect to non-agricultural products, has the power to determine and decide whether to reduce, modify and terminate, or to render final decisions on safeguard measures.

He added that the safeguard duty was imposed to protect the local cement industry from the surge of imported cement in the country.

RP wants rice included in WTO's special products list

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINES will pursue the inclusion of rice in a proposed "special products" list during a World Trade Organization negotiation to be held in September, a senior official of the Department of Agriculture said.

Products that will fall under this category will continue to enjoy tariff cover, with the originating countries given a free hand to make their own tariff reduction schedule.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary for policy and planning Segredo Serrano said this could be an alternative to getting an extension of the quantitative restrictions currently imposed on the country's rice importation.

The Philippines is currently negotiating with eight countries for the extension of its QRs on rice imports. The QR imposition intends to protect the farm sector from the adverse impact of a possible influx of cheap imported rice.

"There will be more flexible treatment for 'special products.' Our position is that there should be no tariff reductions or, if there will be any, tariff reductions should be limited. There should also be no expansion of the TRQ (tariff rate quota) commitments," Serrano told reporters.

Under the TRQ system, WTO members commit to import certain volumes of sensitive farm products at preferential tariff rates.

The WTO's framework agreement for world farm trade provides for the creation of a list of "special products" that intend to protect the agricultural sectors of developing economies like the Philippines.

The government will choose the products that it will recommend for inclusion in that list.

"But we expect that certain countries exporting to the Philippines will try to limit the number of special products that we can declare," Serrano said.

Farm sector seen creating more jobs

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's target of creating six million jobs during her fresh six-year term will be significantly boosted by the steadily increasing levels of farm productivity.

Agriculture Undersecretary Theresa Cruz Capellan said the optimistic projection was based on the actual performance of the agriculture sector in jobs creation during Arroyo's first term.

"Actual jobs created in farming and fisheries from 2001 to 2004 made up about 42 percent of the one million jobs pledged by President Arroyo during her first term," Capellan said.

She said National Statistic Office figures indicated that some 893,000 jobs in farming and agro services were generated during the said period.

Capellan said that if current trends were sustained, the production of hybrid rice, corn, breeders and seaweeds in deficit areas in the country would be among the biggest job creators during the next six years of the Arroyo administration.

Capellan said an estimated 133,332 jobs will be generated from May to October this year for the wet season crop of the Gloria hybrid rice variety. Another 266,665 jobs are expected to be added as the dry season cropping begins in November.

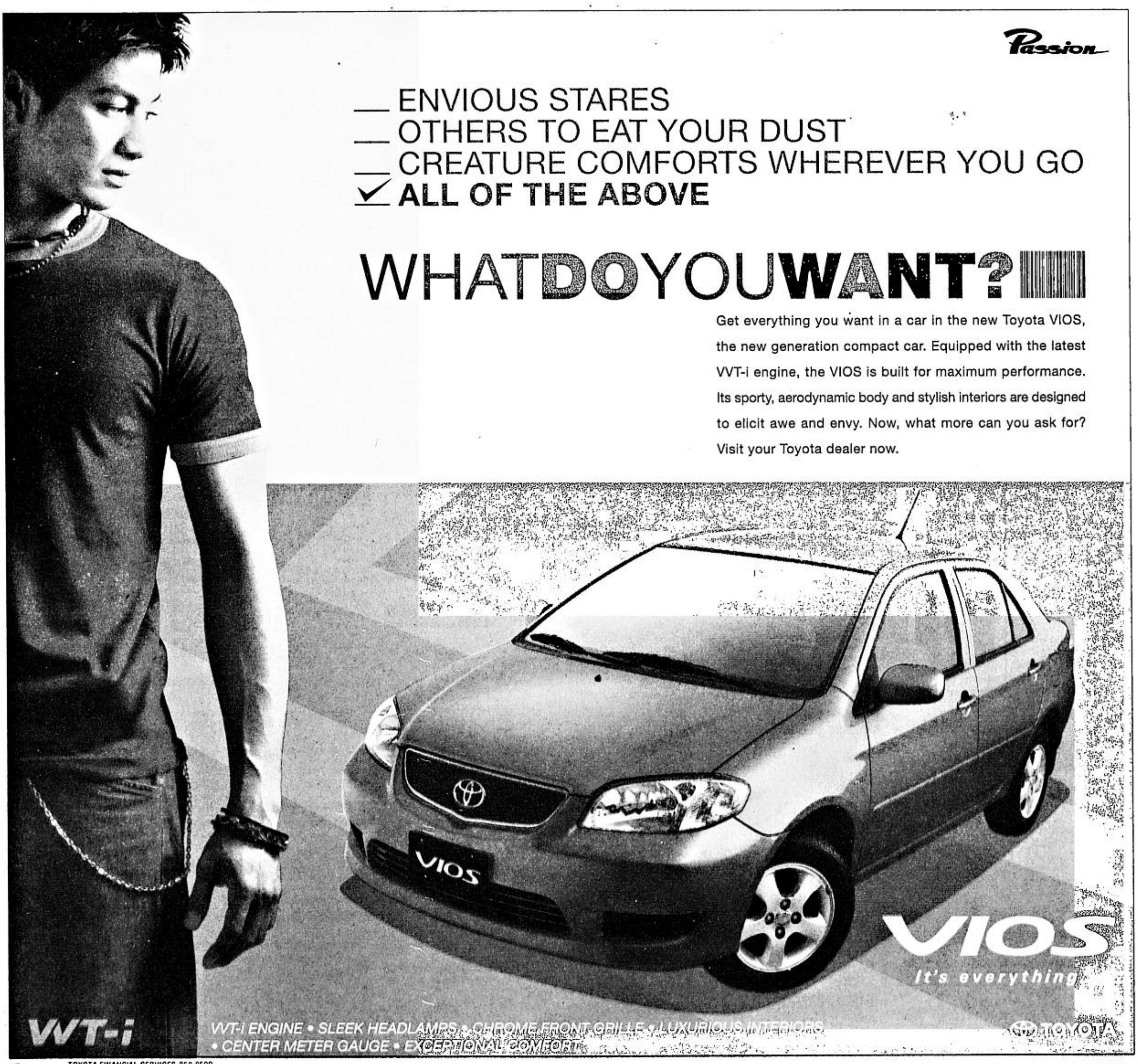
PLDT to push . . . From page B2

ly worth P157 million.

Pangilinan said that the PLDT group had completed the first stage of the equity transaction after selling the preferred Piltel shares to Smart. This was followed by the conversion of about 4.8 million shares, which allowed Smart to gain an initial 32.7-percent stake in Piltel.

The second stage would be Smart's conversion of the remaining preferred shares as well as its purchase of Piltel's common shares.

Analysts said that Piltel's share price now reflected the company's potential, after Smart agreed to restructure the current revenue sharing agreement.



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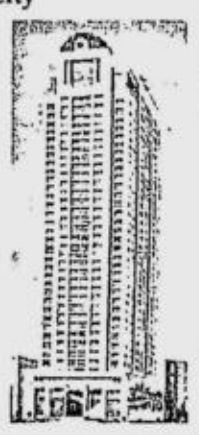

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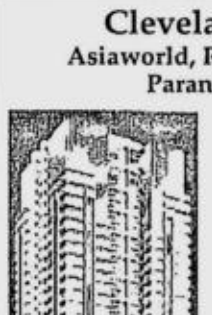

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Cabanatuan City

NOTICE OF RAW SUGAR "B" AUCTION

The National Food Authority, Central Luzon Regional Office, Cabanatuan City invites all interested licensed sugar traders to participate in the auction of 8,776.82 Lkg more or less, raw sugar "B" or Domestic Sugar stored at sugar mill in the province of Tarlac, to wit:

SUGARMILL	VOLUME	INDICATIVE PRICE (P/LKG)
Central Azucarera de Tarlac	8,776.82	P 850.00

The sale shall be for the total volume and on "as-is-where-is basis." The offeror shall be required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the total bid price of the volume bidded in the form of cash, and/or manager's/cashier's check payable to NFA issued by a reputable bank in the City of Tarlac.

Only prospective bidders who have submitted the following requirements to Auction Secretariat are qualified to participate:

1. Original and one (1) xerox copy of current sugar trading license/ registration
2. In case of representative, a duly notarized authorization from the Owner/Chairman certifying that the representative is presently connected with the company and authorized to represent the company to auction and other activities pertinent therein.

The auction shall be conducted at the NFA-Provincial Office, Tarlac City on the following schedule:

ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Bidding Documents and Tender Form	August 9-11, 2004	8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
2. Pre-Auction Conference	August 13, 2004	10:00 a.m.
3. Auction Proper	Right After the Pre Auction Conference	

The bidding documents and tender forms can be secured at the Auction Secretariat at NFA-Provincial Office, Tarlac City after paying a non-refundable registration fee of P500.00. For further inquiries, please contact the RBAC Chairman, NFA-CLRO, Cabanatuan City at Telephone Nos. (044)-463-1167, (044)-463-1168 and (044)-463-1233 or the Auction Secretariat, NFA-Provincial Office, Tarlac City at Tel. No. (045)-982-2577.

NFA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept only such bids which in its judgment are most reasonable and advantageous to the NFA. The decision of the Committee as confirmed by the Regional Director shall be deemed final.

(Sgd.) RUBEN J. RESIDE
RBAC Chairman
Asst. Regional Director

(PDI – August 7 & 8, 2004)

WANTED:

160 Security Guards Male & Female
Posting at Pagcor Casinos in Metro Manila

- At least 2nd year college (72 units)
- 5'6" in height for Security Guard
- 5'3" in height for Lady Guard
- With valid Security Guard License

Apply at:
Royal Security Agency Inc.
8130 Diovic Bldg., Dr. A. Santos Avenue,
(former Sucat Road) San Dionisio,
Parañaque City (near Olivarez Gen. Hosp.)
Tel. No. 826-3892/0920-9138311

WANTED SALES CLERK

- 18-23 yrs. old – w/ or w/o experience
- College level – w/ pleasing personality

Apply personally w/ bio-data & other requirements
at #8 Francisco Court First St., New Manila, Q.C.
near St. Paul's College Q.C.
726-56-24 between 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Food Terminal Inc.

AVAILABLE WAREHOUSE/OFFICE STALLS FOR LEASE

Area = 180 m² to 234 m² Rate = P20T to P25T/mo.

For your processing and dry warehouse facilities or office space needs...

Visit us at Marketing and Estate Management Department
2nd Floor, New Admin Bldg., FTI Complex, Taguig City
or call at (632) 838-3177, 838-4301 loc. 2240/2213
or E-mail us at meld@fti.gov.ph
website: fti.gov.ph

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BILLIARDS

Sale/Rental/Servce 8014494

BUY/SELL

EDUC PLAN Gle 7800106

EDUC'L PLAN Dang 8061574

FIGHTING COCK

Angeles CT Gamefowls, Bulls etc 0458877650/09179619238

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SLIMMING PROGRAM 5221138

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7220433 • 4123543

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC THAT THE S2-CARD WITH LICENSE # 6477543 OF DRA. ROSEMARIE LORENZO BUENO WAS LOST LAST 03,AUGUST, 2004 (PDI-AUGUST 07,2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Attn: PALAWAN Residents
Extra Income 0917-7499447

ATTN:CEBU CITY RESIDENTS
Extra Income 032-2641982 Nico

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10yr Term Min 2T 0920-9090749

•Trvl N Work Fr Home•
earnextranow.com code:atb2004
8531008 09178901851 Arlene

Extraincome uplo P10k/mo7423327

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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I Need 45 Women to Train
with Serious work experience
Call Ms.Tan 8175678 8401182

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Inc Income PT upto 20T/mo3732531

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J-Venture Nr UST 634-1212

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RTW Consign 09167940002

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BUSINESS FOR SALE

RESTAURANT FOR SALE FULLY EQUIPPED T#601-72-03 Cell No. (0917)5398108

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

Single-Driver 8445228

FEMALE

EXPERIENCED ALL AROUND HOUSE GIRL TEL 8436715

SECRETARY-MANILA RESIDENT SEND:PO BOX 558 MANILA

MALE/FEMALE

CHOIR SINGERS 726-2854

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OFC STAFF 09196913491 IRA

Office Clerk 20-28yrs old
Single under or coll grad
Computer Literate w/exp
Jovy 711-9636/732-1522

LANDBANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Naga Branch
LBRDC Bldg., General Luna Street, Naga City
Telephone Nos. (054) 473-2047 & (054) 473-7924

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed proposals together with the 10% bid bond (in the form of Cash or Manager's/Cashier's Check) for the purchase on **CASH BASIS** of the Bank property listed below will be received at the **LANDBANK-NAGA BRANCH, LBRDC Bldg., General Luna Street, Naga City** not later than **AUGUST 25, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.** at which place, date & time, said proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders.

In case of **CLOSELY CLUSTERED TOP BIDS** (defined as having the second highest bid which is not below 90% of the highest bid), the opening of the sealed bids will be immediately followed by an open bidding in which all bidders whose bids are not below 80% of the highest bid may participate. **The minimum increase in the open bidding should not be lower than Php 1,000.00.**

Property Description	Location	Minimum Bid
1. Eight (8) parcels of contiguous commercial land with an aggregate lot area of 1,800 sq.m. and with a six (6) storey building erected thereon (previously utlized as Hotel with a floor area of 7,142 square meters).	Brgy. Concepcion, Grande, Naga City	Php 66,673,500.00

For the complete description of the above-listed properties including bidding forms, you may look for Dept. Mgr. Jocelyn B. Regulacion at LBP-Naga LC, LBRDC Bldg., General Luna Street, Naga City. Prospective bidders are enjoined to inspect the above listed property before entering their bids. The sale of the property shall be on an **"AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis.** The winning bidder/s shall take possession of the awarded property without seeking assistance from the bank. The award in favor of the winning bidder/s shall be subject to the approval of the LBP approving authorities.

If for any reason the above-mentioned date is declared a non-working holiday, then the public bidding shall be held on the next working day at the same time and place aforementioned.

LANDBANK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN AND TO ACCEPT THE BID MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE LBP SHALL BE FINAL AND BINDING.

COMMITTEE ON ASSET DISPOSAL

(PDI - Aug. 7, 2004)

HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION (HGC)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION (HGC), a government-owned and controlled corporation with office address at Jade Bldg., 335 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City, invites all interested parties to register for eligibility to bid for the **FINANCIAL ADVISORY AND DISPOSITION MANAGEMENT OF THE ACQUIRED ASSETS OF THE HGC.**
2. The general objective of the engagement/advisory is to determine the most feasible modes of disposition for HGC portfolio of acquired assets that will generate the highest realizable liquefaction value at the shortest possible time and assist HGC in implementing these modes of disposition.
3. Interested parties must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) with application for eligibility to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) thru the Project Management and Acquired Assets Disposition Group (PMAADG) at the 4th Floor of the HGC office on or **before August 13, 2004.**
4. The eligibility requirements shall be available for issuance to the parties who have submitted their LOI starting **August 16, 2004** at the HGC/PMAADG office with telephone nos. 8973286, 8959015, telefax no. 8973290, and website address www.hgc.gov.ph.
5. The eligibility of registered bidders shall be evaluated using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria based on the eligibility requirements. Eligibility requirements/documents should be submitted in a sealed envelope to PMAADG **on or before August 25, 2004.** The eligibility envelopes shall be opened on **August 25, 2004.**
6. The Quality – Based evaluation procedure shall be used in evaluating the submitted bids of eligible bidders, where eligible bidders shall be required to submit technical and financial proposals simultaneously in separate sealed envelopes. The BAC shall rank the bidders in descending order based on the numerical ratings of their technical proposals. HGC shall then hold negotiations with the financial advisor and disposition manager with the Highest Rated Bid.
7. The bid documents shall be available at the PMAADG starting **August 26, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P10,000.00).**
8. All bids should be submitted to the office of the OIC-Vice President for the PMAADG at the 4th Floor, Jade Bldg., 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City **on or before October 8, 2004** at **2:00 P.M.**
9. The Opening of Bids will be held **on October 8, 2004,** the last day of submission of bids at **2:00 P.M.**
10. The HGC BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive any formality therein.

(Sgd.) **ARTHUR G. TAN**
HGC BAC- CHAIRMAN

(PDI - July 31 & Aug. 7, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Bukidnon
MUNICIPALITY OF KALILANGAN
BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the Municipality of Kalilangan, Province of Bukidnon, invites interested suppliers for Eligibility and to Bid on the **CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING PHASE II.** Listing of such items listed below

NAME OF PROJECT	Purchase/Delivery of various construction materials of Municipal Hall Building Phase II
PROJECT LOCATION	West Poblacion, Kalilangan, Bukidnon
DELIVERY AREA	Municipal Hall Premises
APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT	P3,256,819.40
SOURCE OF FUND	TRUST FUND
CONTRACT DURATION	Immediate delivery (Maximum of 15 working calendar days) upon receipt of contract

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	DATES
1. NEWSPAPERS PUBLICATION	1st – August 7, 2004 / 2nd – August 14, 2004
2. POSTING AT THE CONSPICUOUS PLACE IN THE PREMISES OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KALILANGAN	August 6-18, 2004
3. PERIOD FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS	August 6-18, 2004
4. PRE-BID CONFERENCE	August 20, 2004 – starts 8:30 a.m.
5. ELIGIBILITY CHECK	August 26, 2004 – starts at 9:00 a.m.
6. DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF BIDS	August 27, 2004 – not later than 5:00 p.m.
7. OPENING OF BIDS IN SEALED ENVELOPE	August 28, 2004
8. PLACE/TIME	Municipal Hall Building – 2nd floor 9:00 AM

ITEM NO.	QTY	UNIT	PARTICULARS	UNIT COST	TOTAL AMOUNT
1	35.00	cu.m.	Concrete Tie Beams		
2	957.60	cu.m.	Embankment		
3	147.13	cu.m.	Concrete Flooring		
4	970.41	sq.m.	Concrete Walling		
5	873.21	sq.m.	Concrete Plastering		
6	17.34	cu.m.	Concrete Stair		
7	150.00	L.M.	Plumbing		
8	150.00	L.M.	RCPC Drainage		
9	5,550.00	L.M.	Electrical Wirings		
10	469.80	L.M.	Pre-Cast Concrete Moulding (INCLUDING INSTALLATION)		
11	181.95	sq.m.	Steel Casement Window Frame		

Complete set of eligibility requirements and bid documents maybe obtained from the BAC Secretariat at Municipal's Mayor Office, Municipal Hall, Kalilangan, Bukidnon, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,000.00. Duly accomplished eligibility form shall be submitted in sealed envelope addressed to BAC Chairman c/o BAC Secretariat.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 1% (cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft, irrevocable letter of credit), 1.5% (bank guarantee), 2.5% (surety bond) of the total APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT (ABC)

The BAC reserves the right to accept or reject all bids thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids or to award any work that it considered most advantageous to the Municipality of Kalilangan.

The provision of R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations, shall govern all particulars relative to eligibility, bid bond, performance, bid evaluation and award of contract.

(Sgd.) **VICTOR R. ANSUS**
MAA-1/GSO-DESIGNATE
BAC SECRETARIAT HEAD

(PDI-August 7, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Region VII, Banilad, Cebu City

NOTICE OF SALE THROUGH MARKET DETERMINED PRICING

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** (NFA), Region VII invites all interested NFA licensed grains businessmen to participate in the Sale through Market Determined Pricing (SMDP) for **17,080 bags,** more or less, of **BOC-donated Vietnam rice.** Said stock, stored at Centennial Warehouse, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City, consists of the following brands / lots:

Pile No.	Brand Name	Lot #	Inventory (bags)	Indicative Price (P/kg)
18	Peacock	1	1,175	17.00
17	Premium	2	2,364	17.00
17 & 18	Goldfish	3	5,382	17.00
18	Golden Tree	4	8,159	17.00

Sale shall be on an "as-is-where-is, no-selection, per-lot" basis. Interested parties shall submit the following documents to the SMDP Committee during the pre-SMDP Conference:

1. Certified photo copy of current NFA License / Registration;
2. Duly notarized authorization from the owner/chairman that the representative is presently connected with the firm as an official/employee/stockholder and is authorized to represent the said firm in the SMDP and other related activities; &
3. Certification from the NFA Provincial Registration and Licensing Office, duly noted by the Provincial Manager where the participant is licensed, as to his capitalization.

Offerors shall submit during the SMDP Proper their duly accomplished sealed offer form together with the SMDP bond equivalent to 10% of the total offered amount in the form of either Cash or Manager's / Cashier's Check, payable to NFA. They shall ensure that their capitalization meets their total offered amount. Adjustment is required for those awarded offerors whose capitalization falls below their total offered amount.

SMDP documents can be secured starting August 6, 2004 until 9:00 A.M. of August 11, 2004 from the SMDP Secretariat, NFA Cebu Regional Office, Banilad, Cebu City after payment of a non-refundable fee of Ps 500.00. For further information, interested parties may contact the Asst. Regional Director or the Regional Economist at telephone No. (032) 232-1939. The NFA encourages all interested offerors to conduct an ocular inspection of the subject rice stock prior to the pre-SMDP conference.

A pre-SMDP conference is set at 9:00 A.M. on August 11, 2004 at the 2nd Floor, NFA, Cebu Regional Office, Banilad, Cebu City. Submission and opening of sealed offers are scheduled immediately after the pre-SMDP Conference. In case of unsold volume, another SMDP shall be conducted on August 18, 2004 at the same time and venue and every Wednesday thereafter until all the subject stock shall have been completely disposed.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all offers, waive any informalities or defects found therein, and accept only such offers which are most reasonable and advantageous to the NFA. The decision of the Committee, as confirmed by the Regional Director, shall be deemed final.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO J. ADORABLE**
Asst. Regional Director
SMDPC Chairman

(PDI – August 6, 7 & 8, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Region XII
Tacurong City

NOTICE OF AUCTION OF RAW SUGAR "B"

The National Food Authority, Region XII, Tacurong City as authorized per AO-2K4-G-006 dated July 02, 2004 wishes to invite all interested licensed sugar traders to participate in the auction sale of the following sugar stocks:

PROVINCE	LOT No.	SUGAR MILL/ LOCATION	VARIETY	VOLUME (Lkg)	INDICATIVE PRICE (Php / Lkg)
COTABATO	1	COTABATO SUGAR CENTRAL CORP. KILADA, MATALAM	RAW SUGAR "B"	2,092.26	760.00
TOTAL				2,092.26	

The auction sale of the above described sugar stocks shall be on a "WHOLE LOT" basis.

The auctioneer shall be required to post a bond equivalent to Ten Percent (10%) of the total peso value of the offer to purchae. The bond shall be in the form of Cash or Manager's/Cashier's Check payable to NFA.

Only Prospective auctioneers who have submitted the following documentary requirements are qualified to participate.

1. Duly certified photocopy of sugar trading license/registration.
2. If through representative, Special Power of Attorney (SPA) for single proprietorship and Board Resolution or Secretary's Certificate for corporation. The representative must be an employee of the owner (in case of single proprietorship) or company/corporation he/she will be representing.
3. For authentication purposes, original copy of sugar trading license/registration must be presented before the Auction Committee.

The auction sale shall be conducted at the Office of the Provincial Manager, NFA Cotabato Provincial Office, Kidapawan City on the following schedule:

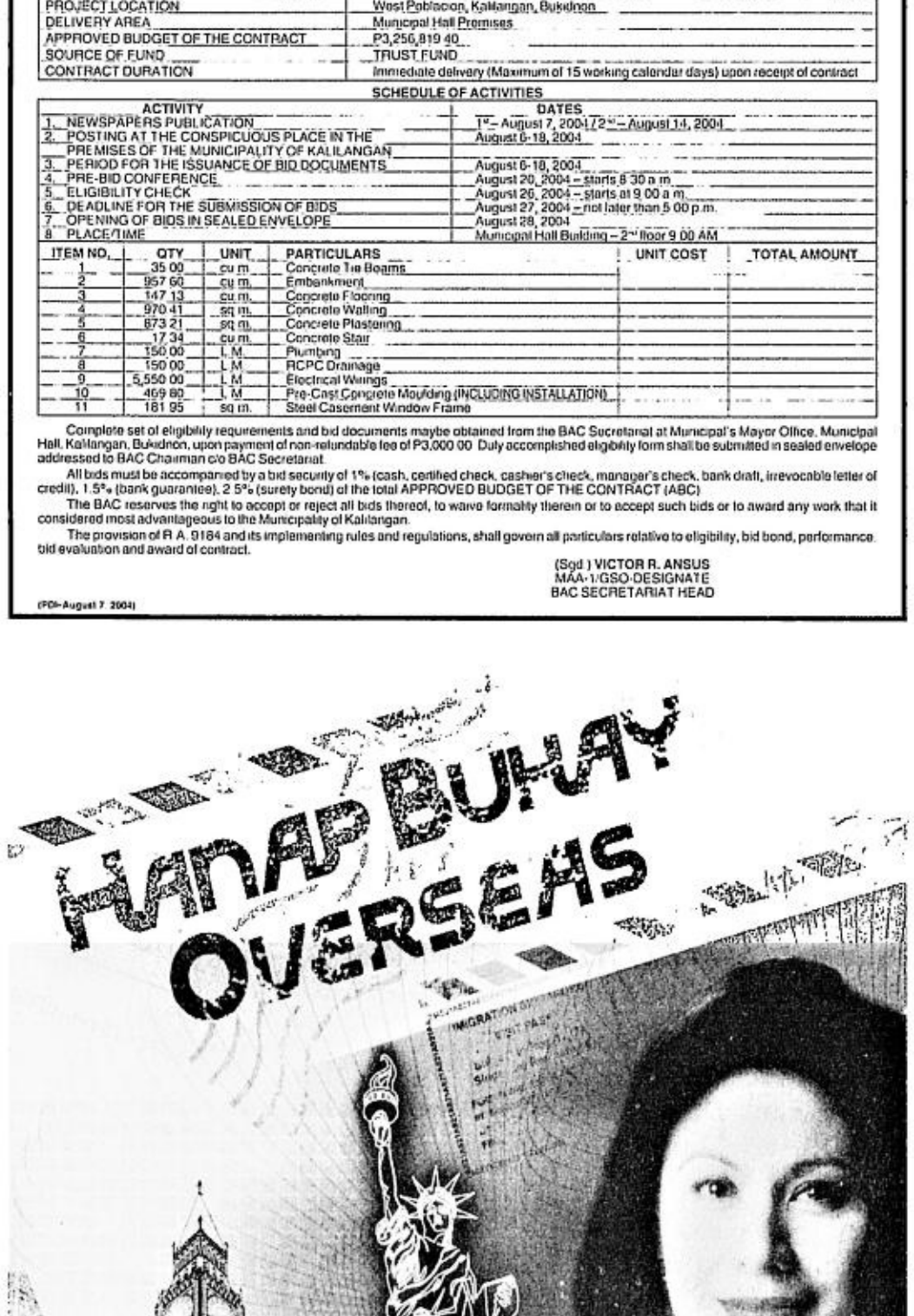
ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Invitation to Bid and Tender Form	August 09-11, 2004	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
2. Pre-Auction Conference	August 13, 2004	9:00 AM
3. Auction Proper	August 13, 2004	10:00 AM

The tender forms may be obtained at NFA Cotabato Provincial Office, Kidapawan City after payment of the non-refundable fee of Php 200.00. For further information, you may inquire with the office of the Provincial Manager, NFA Cotabato Provincial Office, Kidapawan City thru Telephone Nos. 064-278-4268 / 288-1743 or at the NFA Regional Office XII, Tacurong City thru Telephone Nos. 064-200-3803 / 064-384-1247.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECT AND INFORMALITY FOUND THEREIN OR ACCEPT OFFERS WHICH IN ITS JUDGEMENT ARE MOST REASONABLE AND ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **PANGALIAN B. BUSRAN**
Acting Assistant Regional Manager/
RBAC Chairman

(PDI – August 6 & 7, 2004)



New tv program for OFW's on RPN 9

HANAPBUHAY OVERSEAS a 60-minute weekly show hosted by *Ms. Angelique Lazo* and created by the producers of "The OFW Hour" is a take from the former program which successfully brought news and stories about life overseas to the homes of the families left behind.

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- Barangay OFW.
- Visa Bulletin.
- The OFW Family Club, founded by Ambassador Roy V. Señeres, and hosted by Hannah Señeres.

HanapBuhay Overseas airs every Saturday, 5 p.m. on RPN 9.

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PONCIANO CASTILLO MARQUEZ

of Parañaque City, Metro Manila

Peacefully joined our Lord on August 5, 2004 at the age of 83.

His bereaved wife ***VIRGINIA MENDOZA,***

Daddy to Children and their spouses

MANDY & NENE
ERIC & NINI
CHAROY & EVELYN
DIJEN & GREG

Lolo Daddy to Grandchildren

Tricia, Paolo & Gaby
Jiro & Jackie
Pia
Erica
Joseph
Geneve
Christel
Derrick
Regine

Tito to ***Julie & Max*** *and* ***Vic & Ming*** (†)

request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Jose Rizal Chapel, La Funeraria Paz - Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Necrological Services will be on Monday, August 9, 2004, after the 6:30 p.m. Mass.

Interment will be on Tuesday, August 10, 2004, at the Marquez-Mendoza Mausoleum, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City, after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

"Leaving a legacy of LOVE, INTEGRITY and GOOD DEEDS is far more priceless than a vast estate of material wealth."

"In lieu of flowers, donation to his favorite charities will be appreciated."

VIRJEN SHIPPING CORPORATION
MERCURY SHIPPING CORPORATION
VERITAS MARITIME CORPORATION
PILIPINAS CROWN MARITIME CORP.
PHOENIX MARITIME CORPORATION
MARC PROPERTIES CORPORATION
MARDOZA CORPORATION

Announce with deepest sorrow
the passing of their beloved

FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

PONCIANO CASTILLO MARQUEZ

"Boss PCM"

who peacefully joined our Lord on the 5th of August 2004 at the age of 83.

We mourn the loss of a great Leader, a compassionate and sincere Boss, a true Samaritan in his kindness and acts of charity to others, a Loving Husband to his wife **Virginia**, caring Father to his children **Mandy** & **Nene**, **Eric** & **Nini**, **Charoy** & **Evelyn**, **Dijen** & **Greg** and a doting Grandfather to **Tricia**, **Paolo** & **Gaby**, **Jiro** & **Jackie**, **Pia**, **Erica**, **Joseph**, **Geneve**, **Christel**, **Derrick** and **Regine**.

His remains lie in state at the Jose Rizal Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Necrological Services will be on Monday, August 9, 2004, after the 6:30 p.m. Catholic Mass.

Interment will be at the Marquez-Mendoza Mausoleum, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City, on Tuesday, August 10, 2004, after the 2:00 p.m. Catholic Mass.

"Leaving a legacy of LOVE, INTEGRITY and GOOD DEEDS is far more priceless than a vast estate of material wealth."

"In lieu of flowers, donation to his favorite charities will be appreciated."

JULIETA JOVEN UY

Was welcomed by our Lord and brought to heaven by Blessed Mother Mary on August 06, 2004, a First Friday, at the age of 79.

She was *HONEY* to her husband **HARRY**; *MOMMY* to her children **Philip** & **Amy**, **Willie** & **Dada**, **Shirley** and **Raymond** & **Vien**; *MAMA* to her grandchildren **Nikki**, **Rianne**, **Bernise**, **Gia**, **Sam**, **Dana**, **Nana**, **Eya**, **Lia** and **Aaron**; and *JULIE* to her brothers, sisters, family and friends.

She lived a full life and was loved by everyone. She was a devoted wife, a loving and supportive mother, a doting grandmother, a dependable sister and a true friend. Most of all, she was a dedicated child of Jesus Christ and a devotee to our Blessed Mother Mary. Considerate to the very end, she passed away peacefully when she was sure that all of us, her loved ones, were ready for her to go.

Please pray with us as we celebrate and reminisce her life. Her remains lie in state at Christ the King Premiere Chapel C, Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City. Her interment will be at 3 p.m. on Sunday, August 08, 2004 at Christ the King, Greenmeadows Ave., Quezon City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

Godspeed! We will miss you!

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate; ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
243 A B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City, Pangasinan
Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9978
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City; Tel 732-0309; 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu
Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
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Our Dearly Beloved

JOSE H. HABAL

(1922 – 2004)

Peacefully passed away in the Grace of our Lord on August 5, 2004.

His loving wife **Honorata**; children **Jose Jr.**, **Henry**, **Zerita**, **Ferdinand**, **Marietta**; grandchildren **Michael**, **Eirdy**, **Jason**, **Jenine**, **Christine**, **Angeline** & **Andrei**, relatives and friends request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence in Olongapo City.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

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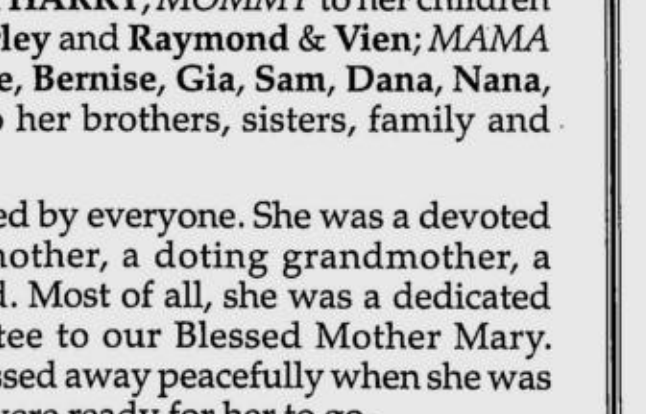

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

World's largest TV manufacturer starts operation, sets targets

TTE Corp (TTE), the biggest global TV manufacturer jointly set up by TCL, China's leading consumer electronics enterprise and Thomson, the world leader in equipment and services for the production and distribution of audio-visual contents officially started operation. The grand opening ceremony was held recently. TTE reshapes the global TV industry, marking a dream come true for "internationalized" Chinese business.

First announced last November, TCL and Thomson signed the cooperative agreement on Jan. 28 in Paris, followed by a preparation period of six months that led to the nomination of the first TTE key management, paving the way for the official establishment of TTE. Headquartered at the TCL Tower in Shenzhen, TTE has net assets of Euro 430 million, with TCL International Holdings Limited (HKSE code: 1070), a company under the TCL Group, holding a 67 percent stake, while Thomson holds a 33 percent stake.

TTE has five profit centers as well as five R&D centers and ten manufacturing sites located in areas at close proximity to major markets. There are more than 20,000 sales outlets and 29,000 employees worldwide - with over 1,100 engineers. On television products, TTE will primarily promote the TCL brand in Asia and the emerging markets, the RCA brand in North America, and the Thomson brand for European market. TTE will offer a complete range of high quality products from economically priced to premium products, from basic features to hi-tech innovations, from analog to digital. Figures released by TCL and Thomson showed that their combined sales volume reached 18.5 million TV sets in 2003, which ranked number 1 in the world.

TTE disclosed its strategic business plans at the opening ceremony, with plans to move from being the TV industry's largest developer and manufacturer today to become the strongest TV company tomorrow with the ambition of achieving annual sales volume exceeding 30 million TV units in the future. To this end, the company will apply three strategies to fully leverage its existing core competitive edge: The Growth Strategy, the Synergy Strategy and the Brand/New Business Expansion Strategy. First, the strong capability in TV research and development worldwide will ensure the application of the most advanced technology. Secondly, the company can also respond quickly to the ever-changing customer needs based on its manufacturing platform that is close to the major international markets. Thirdly, the three brands of Thomson, RCA and TCL have strong customer bases in Europe, North America and China respectively.

TTE also announced its operational targets for the coming year. A key objective is to achieve profitability in 2004 in North American and European markets. In terms of product planning, the company will develop new-feature products under cost control. TTE has more ambition on high-end TV. TTE will promote XF (flat tube) and digital TV in European and North American markets with the best performance/price ratio to improve the market share. In China, 16/9 wide-screen displays are already being used for high-end computers. On top of the HDTV DLP products that have already been launched, the company plans other HDTV introductions in China. There are several DLP models in Europe and 11 models planned for the US this year.

TTE is expected to benefit from the synergies generated from the merger of TCL's and Thomson's TV businesses. The advantages will be reflected in lowered sourcing cost, enhanced productivity, optimized worldwide manufacturing, global business presence and a full range of products that broaden revenue base and enhance growth. The most impact of the synergies will be substantially reflected in manufacturing and sourcing.

Thomson is one of the companies who possess the most IP in the industry. TTE will have much collaboration in IP area with Thomson. Thomson's advantage in TV product research and development will contribute to enhancing the innovation and competitiveness of the TCL brand, directly helping its business in China and other emerging markets.

Globalization and the coming of the digital era provide great opportunities for the companies in China and other emerging markets to grow faster than ever, as well as to cooperate with multinationals worldwide. industry experts expect, the establishment of TTE to be a role model in the process of globalization of Chinese companies. With the development of TTE worldwide, more and more Chinese companies are entering the global markets, and the world is seeing increasing Chinese players in the global mainstream industry.

TTE's top management team was also introduced at the ceremony. Officials from the French Embassy and Consulate, Guangdong Provincial Government, Shenzhen Municipal Government and Huizhou Municipal Government also came to congratulate TCL and Thomson on the creation of TTE.

WORLD FOOD EXPO IN 'HOW 'BOUT MY PLACE'

The most anticipated food exposition in the country today, World's Food Expo 2004 (Wofex) which is from Aug. 4 to 7 at the World Trade Center will be featured in the top-rated TV cooking show, 'How 'Bout My Place' aired every Sunday, 10:30 a.m. at ABC 5 as guest of the TV show representing Wofex are Boydee Dizon, chair of PEPgroup, organizer (seated, middle) and Joel Pascual, president of PEPgroup (seated, rightmost) and Michael Crisologo, special events manager of PEPgroup (standing rightmost). Chef Miguel de Alba Ristorante (standing leftmost) will also be interviewed as he talks highly about last year's experience in Wofex both as guest chef and trade visitor. Standing in the middle is the renowned culinarian, chef Fernando Aracam as host of 'How 'Bout...'. Representing Little Wings Production, producer and director Butch Llige (seated leftmost).

Dos and don'ts of teen dating

TEEN dating can be both exciting and nerve-racking at the same time. To keep the stress level down, young daters should keep in mind that teen dating is more a way of developing one's social skills than finding a soul mate. Before going on a tryst, here are a few dating tips from Bambini Baby Cologne:

Involve your parents - Ask your parents' permission; don't go sneaking around. Arrange to have your date pick you up at your house so you can introduce him to your parents. Be responsible and stick to your curfew. Most parents tend to become overprotective so talk to your folks and show them that you deserve their trust. Remember that they only have your best interest at heart.

Find out about the other person - Go beyond merely knowing your date's name and how cute he looks. Don't go out with a person whom no one in your trusted circle knows or is acquainted with. The thought of finding love through text messaging and the internet is exciting but bad things can happen like date rape so be very, very careful.

Be yourself - Be your best when going out on a date but don't pretend to be who you're not. If you discover before the rendezvous that your escort has gone on trips abroad, read about the culture of other countries so you can carry on a decent conversation. Don't brag about having gone surfing in Australia when the farthest you've ever really gone is Baguio.

Do an activity you both like - Find a common ground and make plans about doing an activity that you both enjoy. You can go out with a group and play badminton together. Or if you're the artistic type, plan on visiting the museum. There's more to dating than just dining out and strolling in the mall.

Enjoy the conversation - Maintain eye contact and smile. Don't hog the conversation by going on and on about yourself. Ask questions and try to discover what your date's interests are. Be a good listener.

Dress appropriately - Don't try too hard to appear attractive to the other person by putting on to much make-up or wearing flirty outfits. Be stylish, comfortable, modest and confident. Before stepping out of the house to meet your date, spray on the refreshing scent of Bambini Baby Cologne by The Rogemson Company Inc. To stay self-assured and nice-smelling, keep a bottle of your favorite Bambini Cologne in your bag. There are nine variants to choose from: Innocence, Giggles, Blush and Sixteen under the "Attitudes" line, and the "Fruitshakes" range which include Melon Marvel, Pineapple Pop, Raspberry Rave, Dewberry Delight, Grapefruit Giddy, Mango Mania, Kiwi Kiss and Apple Ado. Bambini Baby Cologne is a available in leading supermarkets nationwide.

Relax and enjoy the experience - Don't try to be Ms. Perfect or you'll end up being too anxious and critical of yourself. Also, don't set outrageous expectations on your date like counting on him to look like Brad Pitt. Loosen up and have fun.

INQUIRER HOSTS FAREWELL LUNCH FOR GERMAN AMBASSADOR

The Philippine Daily Inquirer recently hosted a farewell lunch for German ambassador Herbert Jess and his wife Micheline. In photo are (seated, from left) Mrs Jess, the ambassador, Inquirer chair Marixi Prieto, (standing) Inquirer chief financial officer Luis Ymson, Inquirer board member Dennis Valdes, Mr and Mrs Ramon Sy, Inquirer board member Charlie Rufino, Inquirer AVP for strategic marketing communications Celine Madamba, Inquirer publisher Isagani Yambot and Inquirer president and CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez.

PHOTO BY ROGER CARPIO

LAUNCHING OF MARK PRO FOUNDATION

Shown are (from left): Ding Salvador, chair of Mark Pro Foundation; Alex Castillo, president, Del Monte Phils; Josiah Go, president of Mark Pro; Dr. Ned Roberto, Chair of Market Research Solutions; Rufino Tiam-Lee, VP, Monde Nissin.

FILIPINO PHYSICIAN IN US RETIRES

Dr. Fernando Mañalac physician-neuropsychiatrist, another Filipino who made good in his career in America, has recently retired from his practice in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and as associate medical director of Northwood Health Systems in Wheeling, W. Virginia. He served in the military during Operation Desert Storm as a lieutenant colonel in the 1st US Army Medical Corps. He authored a book titled 'Manila: Memories of World War II'. Dr. Mañalac is the son of the late Carmen Jacinto and Bonifacio Mañalac. He hails from Quiapo, Manila. He is married to Daneen Marie Gay of Wellsburg, W. Va.

Phelps Dodge participates in IIEE

WIRE and Cable Industry and market leader Phelps Dodge Phils Energy Products Corp recently participated in the mid-year general membership meeting of the Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers of the Philippines (IIEE) at the Philippine International Convention Center from June 16 to 19. The event was held in conjunction with the 4th Joint Sectoral Committee Meeting of the Asean EEMRA and Professional Regulation Commission Oathtaking Ceremonies for the new Electrical Engineering Board Passers.

Phelps' Dodge's presence at the exhibit is a re-affirmation of its commitment as a leading industry partner. It is a brand that strongly believes in long-term commitments, manifested in the assurance of safety and protection for its clients and end-users whenever they build their homes and buildings. Its electric wires and cable go through the stringiest of manufacturing procedures to ensure superior quality all the time and conform with various national and international quality standards.

The wide range of world class products include building wires and cables, magnet wires, communication cables, automotive wires, power cables, special cables, bare copper rods and wires, copper line wires and aluminum wires and cables. It is a major supplier to leading industry companies and institutions and has become the primary source of electrical wires for big commercial and residential infrastructure projects.

In the Philippines, Phelps Dodge has a history of excellence and innovations that reinforces its strength as a brand and as a company.

ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS REDEFINES PURPOSE OF BUSINESS

Business is not only about profits but also building a nation. This was the value proposition given to the professors, administrators and staff by Dr. Alfredo R.A. Bengzon, Dean of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business (AGSB) during their recent faculty and staff conference. The next generation of business leaders will be up to that challenge if AGSB gets its way. In the recent conference, they were urged by resource persons in cultural anthropology, political science, social policy and public affairs as well as a business leader to challenge themselves and their students to bring the nation forward through their business endeavors. AGSB faculty and staff responded with action plans to define their individual and corporate role in nation-building as a distinguished learning institution for business. Photo shows Philippine Investment Management (Phinma) Inc president Ramon Del Rosario Jr sharing his views on how business can help in nation-building during the 2004 Faculty and Staff Conference of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business.

ProductFILES

Official Tissot watch for the 2004 Olympics

THIS latest sports watch from Tissot epitomizes the brand's performance in its ingenious use of the latest technologies in materials and design, and is therefore a fitting timepiece to choose as the official Tissot watch for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. Every element of the watch recalls the world of two-wheeled sports, Tissot being the Official Timekeeper of the world championships of the four disciplines of Cycling, which sport is one of the few to be in every modern Olympic Games, the first road race having being held along the Marathon course in Athens in 1896. The crown protection and bezel with its slanting ventilation shafts, inspired by the braking discs, the rubber tire-track bracelet and the very material of the case itself in a new synthetic mix high in carbon fiber (the whole held in place by screws reminiscent of those used on the bicycle components) all underpin Tissot's commitment to modern sporting excellence in the world of cycling.

More PEP on pages B10 and B11

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Drastic step to win battle of the bulge

SANRAY Chua recently underwent surgery to help him lose weight. Dr. Ferdinand Samonte performed the operation.

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

SANRAY Chua, 36, is a picture of contentment and happiness. Finally, he can see and feel the results of the surgery he underwent last June.

Since the operation, he has already shed 13 kg and continues to lose weight. His blood pressure is pretty much under control these days. His energy has improved and he no longer feels sluggish and tired.

What's more, he can now perform tasks which he considered impossible before, like scratching his back and clipping his toe nails.

Chua underwent a Lap-Band surgery, a minimally invasive type of bariatric (weight reduction) surgery that involves placing a silicone elastomer band around the upper part of the stomach, creating a small gastric pouch and a calibrated opening to the rest of the stomach.

The pouch can hold only a small amount of food so one would be forced to eat less.

Chua's doctor, Ferdinand Samonte of the De Los Santos Medical Center, says that from the upper stomach pouch, food will pass more slowly through the outlet created by the band to the lower part. This helps the patient feel full for a longer period and thus won't eat frequently.

Chua says he has been fat all his life.

"I tried just about everything—from slimming foods to enrolling at gyms—but nothing worked and I continued to get bigger and bigger," Chua says.

When he was recently diagnosed as hypertensive and was advised to take regular angiogram tests, he decided it was time to take drastic action.

A silicone elastomer band is placed around the stomach to control the amount of food one can take.

Low risk, reversible

Samonte, who was trained in Australia, was the first doctor to perform Lap-Band surgery in the Philippines last March 8.

"Lap-Band surgery was designed to help a person lose excess body weight. It uses a process called laparoscopic banding, and unlike other types of bariatric surgery procedure, it involves no opening or removal of any part of the stomach or intestines, thus the risk is low and the procedure is totally reversible," says Samonte.

At present only a handful of Filipino surgeons are qualified to perform the procedure, mostly trained by Inamed Health which markets Lap-Band.

Samonte, however, warns that Lap-Band surgery is not a miracle cure.

"It is an aid to losing weight and is intended for people who are 45 kg (100 lbs) overweight or twice their ideal weight. But to get long-lasting weight-loss results, one will still need to work at it: follow rules on eating and exercise, and have a regular visit to the surgeon for the required follow-up sessions," he says.

Samonte says the amount of weight one loses will depend on the compliance with dietary instructions, exercise regimen and one's tolerance to adjustments to the tightness of the band.

"The diameter of the band is adjustable to meet individual needs; it can be adjusted as one loses weight," he explains.

Body mass index

Chua is 5'6" and used to weigh 102 kg. He had a body mass index (BMI) of 37 that classified him as moderately to morbidly obese.

A person with a BMI of 30 or more is considered obese, and at a higher risk developing many chronic diseases such as heart and respiratory diseases, Type 2 diabetes, hypertension and some cancers, as well as early death.

BMI is calculated by dividing the weight in kilograms by the square of the height in meters (kg/m2). For example, an adult who weighs 70 kg and whose height is 1.75 m will have a BMI of 22.9 kg/m2.

According to the World Health Organization, a BMI of 18.5 to 25 is considered "healthy," a BMI of 25–29 is considered "at increased risk" of developing associated diseases, and a BMI of 30 or more is considered at "moderate to high risk."

Chua is now recuperating from his Lap-Band surgery and he says he feels "normal" again.

"I strongly believe I have won the battle with my body and I'm going to make sure it stays that way," Chua says.

Children's tales of our natural world

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

"I REMEMBER that day when I first came out of my shell. At first I was threatened by the vastness of this new world. It was unknown, and the unknown was to be feared. But oh, all fears were chased away by Kashis, my mother."

So starts the poignant story of Niysha, the Philippine eagle. Under the loving care of her mother and the watchful guidance of her father, Niysha learns to fly. But evil—in the form of humans—mars her paradise. Her parents are captured, never to be heard from again. Niysha takes a mate, and they dote over their own little one. But one day the hunters return, and this time Niysha has to become the protector.

Who can tell children's tales better than children themselves? I have read many children's books by award-winning adult authors. A lot of them are excellent, but some sound condescending, trite and oversimplified.

On the other hand, the story of Niysha, titled "Monsters," has a ring of authenticity. Miriam Garcia of the St. Benedict College in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, was in fifth grade when she penned the tale in 1999, for which she won the Kuwentong Kalikasan Katha ng Kabataan nationwide short story writing contest on environment preservation, spearheaded by RCBC, and judged by the Philippine Board of Books for Young People.

> Who can tell children's tales better than children themselves?

Various views

How do our youth view our environment today? Andionne Celeste Parlade (Grade 6) of the Miriam College Grade School in Quezon City imagines herself as a monkey-eating eagle whose dream is to roam free, but is now forced to stay in a wildlife refuge. Gerardo Juan Luis Manzo (Grade 6) of the Ateneo de Manila Grade School identifies with a *pawikan* (giant sea turtle) who is determined to go home.

Michelle Bullough (Grade 4) of the International School Manila in Taguig tells a story about glowing pebbles and magic trees. Charlson Co (Grade 2) of the BEPZ Elementary School in Mariveles, Bataan, recycles paper into Christmas tree ornaments.

Hanna Patricia Lomerio (Grade 3) and Princess Morillo (Grade 6) of the Baesa Elementary School in Caloocan City learn to care for creatures and their environs. Jho Via Abueg (Grade 5) of the Sta. Ana Elementary School in Manila literally feels the pain of pelted trees in the backyard.

Trash, pollution

Fourth graders Coleen Claudette Luminarias of the Enfant Cheri Study Center in Butuan City, John Rijz Gabaon of the Paco Elementary School in Bulacan, Miyah Queliste of the Maulawin Elementary School in Pagsanjan, Laguna, Angebvi Sepino of the Angelicum School of Iloilo, and Ritchel Modal of the Palinta Elementary School in Zamboanga del Sur bemoan trash, water pollution and forest destruction.

Sixth graders Amafel Baylon of the Pasig Catholic College, Jenny Pearl Fadul of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy in Davao, Dominic Briguera of the Naga Central School II in Camarines Sur, and Gleson Madiano of the Bokod Central Elementary School in Benguet weep over denuded mountains and foul air, but rejoice in sparkling rivers and pristine surroundings.

Seventh grader Patricia Mae Cielo of the Colegio San Agustin in Makati City spins a futuristic satire of the destruction of nature. Jane Maureen Amata (Grade 2) of the Botolan South Central in Zambales sums it best: "Nature, like people, cannot live alone."

'Unadulterated pen'

These stories are collected in the beautifully illustrated 10th edition of Kuwentong Kalikasan award winners, donated by the RCBC Foundation to public and private schools nationwide.

Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco remarks: "Reading the stories our children have written about the environment, I cannot but admire the young eyes that see what Mother Nature is painting for us. What adds to the beauty of their prose is their simple appreciation of the abundant things God has given us, which many of more advanced age take for granted. Their unadulterated pen reminds those of us who have forgotten, to value nature's treasure trove."

Whatever happened to Niysha the eagle? Alas, her efforts are futile. All of her family are caught and caged.

However, the tragic ending contains a note of hope: "I feel the end coming now. I am entering a dark tunnel and...wait! Somebody is calling my name! Ephros my mate? Maybe he has fought free from his captors and is calling me to go back home in the forest. But then, perhaps it's Kashis, my mother. Calling me and telling me that my life is finished, and I may now join her in the land where there is no need to hunt and kill and there are no human monsters to do me harm."

Today RCBC launches its 11th writing contest, with the theme "Endangered Species in the Philippines." Stories can be in English or Filipino (Segment A for Grades 1 to 4 and B for Grades 5 to 7). Prizes include a trophy, cash and a scholarship package. For entry forms and mechanics, contact PIAA at 885-7811 or 845-1199 or piaa@piaa-advertising.com or any RCBC branch.

KIDS' QUIZ WEEK 1

How we communicate

NO man is an island that's why people communicate with one another. Through the years, their means of communication has much improved, for instance, from pen and paper to the word processor. Try to match the means by which people communicate with the people who pioneered such machines, equipment or tools.

Score: 1-4 Good; 5-7 Very Good; 8-10 Excellent

Machines/Tools	Inventor
1. telephone	a) John Bardeen, Walter Brattain, William Shockley
2. television	b) Seymour Rubenstein and Rob Barnaby
3. radio	c) Johannes Gutenberg
4. telegraph	d) Vladimir Zworykin
5. transistor	e) Alexander Bain
6. printing press	f) Nicolas Conte
7. word processor	g) Guglielmo Marconi
8. pencil	h) Alexander Graham Bell
9. paper	i) Cal Lin
10. fax machine	j) Samuel Morse

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In living color

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

IT'S been said many times that the body compensates for the loss of one sense by acutely sharpening another. In "Star Wars," Yoda trains Luke to listen for the floating balls that zap him with lasers, and to deflect the beams with his lightsaber. In the Marvel universe, Daredevil's four other senses are enhanced by the radioactive waste that blinded him. In Vladimir Korolenko's story, "The Blind Musician," Pyotr learns to deal with his blindness and becomes a successful concert pianist.

Pyotr is not alone; several other blind people have taken up music, notably Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder and the band of musicians that usually performs in at least one of the malls on weekends.

In the July 15 issue of the journal Nature, psychologist Pascal Belin and his colleagues at the Centre de Recherche en Neuropsychologie et Cognition of the University of Montreal hypothesized that the blind make better musicians because the part of their brains that normally processes visual information can also process other sensory information.

At birth, Dr. Belin told Nature in a related article, all sensory information is processed by interconnected centers in the brain.

"In normal brains, these connections are gradually eliminated. But in the early blind, they might be preserved and used," he said.

Grouped into 3

To prove his theory, Belin et al. looked at three groups of volunteers: those who had either been born blind or who had lost their vision by age 2; those who had gone blind between the ages of 24 and 46; and a control group composed of "sighted" individuals.

The study's setup was simple: each participant listened to eight pairs of notes and identified which note was higher or lower than the other. Researchers varied the notes they played, as well as the pitch and the length of time the volunteers heard each note.

Belin et al. found that in general, all the participants were able to identify which notes were higher and which notes were lower when the tones were played quickly and soon after one another.

Overall however, the early-blind group was quicker and more accurate than the other two groups at distinguishing notes.

There was no significant difference between the performances of the late-blind and sighted volunteers.

Belin says the results suggest that the brain is more adaptable at an early age and the loss of one sense allows the processing centers in the brain to compensate. In the case of the early-blind subjects, their visual cortices adapted from processing just visual images to helping process the sounds they heard.

If this is true, then are blind people not just hearing the music but also seeing it? Could they be seeing the notes in different colors or shapes or sizes as they hear them being played? Is that why they can identify notes faster than sighted people?

Color through music

One of the most memorable passages in Korolenko's book has Pyotr and his mother sitting in front of the piano. His mother alternates between two notes—one in the bass register and one pitched much higher.

When his uncle comes upon the scene, Pyotr's mother explains that the boy says he can distinguish between black and white when he hears those two notes. And when his mother plays a fast arpeggio that sounds like bells pealing, Pyotr declares that he understands the meaning of the term "ringing red."

"The Blind Musician" fascinated me because of the notion that a blind person could learn about color through music.

Synesthesia

But perhaps truth is stranger than fiction: there are people who can see in color the words they hear, who can feel the sounds they hear without standing next to the subwoofers in a disco, and who can taste shapes without eating a cube of sugar.

Three hundred years ago these people were considered mentally unstable; today science says they have a condition called synesthesia. No one knows how many synesthetes there are in the world; estimates range from 1 in every 300, to 1 in every several thousands.

Scientists suggest that synesthetes perceive the world simultaneously in two different senses because the sensory information processors are cross-wired: the area of the brain that identifies colors is right next to the part of the brain that deals with letters and numbers.

If this is true, and Belin is right, could an early blind person be diagnosed as a synesthete? Would we be able to tell?

I guess we'll just have to wait and see (pun intended), preferably in color.

Stomach flu can ruin sea travel

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

ABOARD THE GALAXY—We're out in the open seas somewhere in the Mediterranean with more than 3,000 passengers and crew in one of the biggest ships ever built. The Galaxy, according to the friendly and accommodating crew headed by Capt. Athanacios Peppas, is said to be bigger than the Titanic.

Someone asked about norovirus. Several outbreaks in cruise ships in the last few years has raised people's awareness about it, to almost hysterical levels.

It is not generally a life-threatening infection, but it can make one's life miserable for several days and it can certainly ruin one's holiday.

Highly contagious

The norovirus was named after an outbreak that occurred in Norwalk, Ohio, some 30 years ago. It is a highly contagious gastrointestinal affliction with flu-like symptoms including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal cramps.

Commonly known as "stomach flu," it has other symptoms like low-grade fever and headache. It is spread either through contaminated food and water or by objects touched by infected people.

Once a person has been exposed to norovirus, it takes anywhere from one to three days for its symptoms to appear, and then it typically lasts 24 to 48 hours.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that annually, about 23 million people get sick from norovirus. Epidemiologists say norovirus is a seasonal virus with a "high season" that extends from October to April.

Norovirus does not limit its spread to ship travelers. It thrives in closed environments that attract a lot of people. It's been known to close down schools, college dormitories and factories.

It has been a concern for cruise ships because passengers and crew typically occupy small closed-in quarters, such as casinos, theaters and banquet-style dining rooms.

Prevention

How does one avoid being infected with the norovirus? Here are some practical tips:

• Wash your hands often. This is still the best way to avoid contaminants.

MEDICAL FILES

• Avoid uncooked food as much as possible, and that includes raw oysters and salads.

• Don't serve yourself even in buffets. "Gloved" attendants are on hand to give you a serving of the food you want.

• Water can also be a carrier, so limit yourself to the bottled variety (and avoid ice cubes).

• Limit person-to-person contact as much as possible, including shaking hands and such. Do not share drinking glasses and eating utensils.

• Pack extra soap and a bottle of rubbing alcohol or other antiseptics.

• Taking a relatively high dose of antioxidants (vitamins A, C, E and selenium) may help boost one's resistance to the virus and other infections.

• Should you have signs and symptoms of an infection during your sea travel, contact the ship doctor, stay in your cabin, and take a lot of fluids as dehydration usually causes more serious complications of the infection.

Outbreaks

When there's a significant outbreak of norovirus or a similar type of virus, crew members clean the ship more thoroughly than usual, using stronger solvents.

They also distribute information materials offering precautionary tips to passengers on board as well as a memo at the embarkation point for travelers boarding a ship that had previously seen a high percentage of illness.

Despite the best efforts of some ships, norovirus outbreaks have occasionally been reported. Two years ago, four voyages of Holland America's Amsterdam had significant levels of ill passengers suspected to have the norovirus. The shipping line finally canceled a cruise to "break the cycle."

During its "down-time," the ship underwent a bow-to-stern sanitization that included a scrubdown of in-cabin objects ranging from television remote controls to ice buckets to bibles, sanitizing furniture and fabrics, replacing some 2,500 pillows, and steam-cleaning carpets.

Despite lingering concerns about the possibility of a norovirus infection, CDC epidemiologists say it's perfectly safe to go on cruise ships. The sanitation standard in cruise liners is the highest in the world.

Oh, I just sneezed. I hope it's not the norovirus.

Microbicides tested for HIV protection

CLASSES of drugs used to treat patients with HIV are being tested for the first time as microbicides to protect women from becoming infected during sex, a scientist said during the recent 15th International AIDS Conference in Bangkok.

The tests—some of them under way, others expected to begin by the end of 2004—involve more than 28,000 women in the United States, Africa and Asia. A number of other antiviral drugs are being tested in the laboratory or on animals.

Top of wish list

A microbicide is at the top of health workers' wish list to protect many women in poor countries whose husbands refuse to use condoms. A microbicide would also protect an infected woman's sex partners from infection.

"Microbicides will not be magic bullets, and microbicides probably will never be as effective as condoms," which are considered nearly 100 percent protective, said Dr. Zeda F. Rosenberg, chief executive of the nonprofit International Partnership for Microbicides.

"But even a partially effective microbicide could save millions of lives," she said.

It will take five to 10 years before any microbicide is marketed, Rosenberg said, but eventually the drugs may prove more effective in combinations similar to the "drug cocktails" that many infected people now take.

Ideal microbicide

An ideal microbicide would work in three ways. First, it would kill HIV in the vagina and cervix. Second, it would prevent any virus that escapes from attaching to a woman's cells, the way HIV starts to infect. Third, for any virus that does enter cells, the microbicide would block an enzyme, reverse transcriptase, which HIV needs to replicate.

An effective microbicide would not irritate the vagina or cervix; such damage could enhance the ability of HIV to infect cells.

For example, Rosenberg said, an ideal microbicide would not kill the bacteria that are normally present in healthy vaginas and that produce hydrogen peroxide, a natural disinfectant. Also, scientists do not want a microbicide to change the acidity of the vagina because it could allow unwanted bacteria to flourish.

In developing drugs as microbicides, scientists would need to find ways to deliver them as gels and creams or add them to sponges. Another approach would be to put them in rings that would be inserted into the vagina. The rings would be designed to release the drug over a period of a month or longer.

While cost, stability and ease of manufacturing are critical, "how the product looks, feels, smells, tastes are all critical since a highly effective microbicide that no one likes to use will not prevent any infection," Rosenberg said. *New York Times*

SCHOOLCHILDREN of Nabaoy Elementary School in Aklan enjoy a healthy afternoon snack of protein-rich Nutrimo Curls which is distributed through a "kid-friendly" feeding program called NutriBreak.

Feeding program succeeds in 2 schools

RANDY, 11, is huddled in a small circle with his classmates, eagerly munching on his snack which he washes down with a cup of orange juice drink. Randy and his classmates have been enjoying the same snack for more than six months every day. What Randy considers a treat is actually an energy- and vitamin-rich health snack given to him and his classmates under a feeding program called NutriBreak.

According to Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) 2001 statistics, around 30 percent of Filipino children are underweight and around 30-40 percent are underheight.

NutriBreak helps address this problem by bringing a supplementary feeding program to Randy's school in Kirang Elementary School in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya and also at the Nabaoy Elementary School in Malay, Aklan.

Nutrition, hydration

NutriBreak is a six-month nutrition and hydration program implemented in partnership with FNRI and supported by the health and education departments. It is a component of the Healthy and Active Lifestyle program of Coca-Cola Philippines.

In both schools, NutriBreak got enthusiastic responses from the schoolchildren.

NutriBreak appealed to the schoolchildren because it deviated from the usual porridge-and-water staple in feeding programs and instead combined a fun and tasty snack called Nutrimo Curls and fortified juice drink Eight O' Clock.

Made of protein-rich lentils, Nutrimo Curls is an energy-packed snack especially developed by the FNRI as a dietary supplement for malnourished or undernourished children. The Benguet State University worked with FNRI to produce the snack.

Eight O' Clock carries the Sangkap Pinoy Seal for meeting the DOH-approved levels of micronutrients, specifically vitamin A, iodine and iron which are needed for the body's normal growth and development.

Increase in height, weight

An evaluation by the FNRI after the six-month supplementary feeding period showed an increase in both weight and height of the children. Of the 233 students from both schools, 97.8 percent had an increase in weight, while 94.2 percent had an increase in height.

"There was a significant increase in the height and weight of the children that can be attributed to Nutrimo Curls and the juice drink," said Mario Capanzana of FNRI's Food Science and Technology Division.

"NutriBreak is a very promising program that can be adopted by other schools in remote and underserved communities. We hope these communities will have the foresight to continue the program or come up with their own, and involve the local government units," said Coca-Cola Philippines community relations manager Cindy Lim.

Sleep deprivation kills thousands daily

IT IS WELL-KNOWN that one of the requirements of healthy living is getting enough quality sleep. Sleep, like food and water, is important considering the fact that it occupies at least a third of our lives. Yet many of us are still unaware of conditions associated with sleep disorders, its consequences to our well-being and even to public health.

Prof. Max Hirschkowitz of the US Veterans Administration Medical Center said that if one would add up every death that resulted from road accidents due to drowsy driving and sleep fatigue every week worldwide, it will be equivalent to one major fully loaded airplane crashing every day.

This huge number of deaths and disabilities associated with sleep deprivation signals a need for a better understanding of the importance of sleep. According to Dr. Patrick Moral of the University of Santo Tomas Hospital, we need to look closely at sleep disorders

because of their bearing on public health and safety as untreated patients occupy sensitive jobs such as drivers and pilots.

They, in turn, may place numerous people at risk.

Enhancing sleep quality

There are ways, according to sleep experts, to help us enhance sleep quality and prevent sleep fatigue. One way is to practice sleep hygiene—a list of dos and don'ts before going to bed. Avoiding alcohol, cigarette and caffeine before bedtime increases the quality of sleep.

It is also a good idea to associate the bed only with sleep. This means doing work-related activities such as balancing checkbooks and even reading is a big no-no while in bed.

There are also some natural substances which people with sleep problems can take to help them improve their quality of sleep. One of these substances is melatonin.

Melatonin is a hormone that is naturally produced in the pineal gland—an endocrine gland located at the base of the brain. Melatonin is synthesized from the amino acid tryptophan when the eyes detect no light. This hormone is produced, mainly at night, to regulate the body's sleep-wake cycles.

Helping hasten sleep

Studies suggest that melatonin helps hasten sleep and ease jet lag without the hazards or side effects of prescription pills. Other studies suggest that melatonin may have immune and antioxidant functions.

As people get older, their production of melatonin diminishes. This explains why older people tend to have difficulty having enough quality sleep. This makes supplementation of melatonin very essential.

Melatonin-T 3mg is taken once a day and is available in all Mercury and Watsons drug stores. It is manufactured by Now Foods, one of the leading manufacturers of vitamins and food supplements in the United States.

Melatonin-T is locally distributed by Trianon International Inc.

'Kulani' or lymphoma?

FEEL that lump under your skin? It could either be just *kulani* (enlarged lymph node) or the dreaded lymphoma, otherwise known as cancer.

Lymphoma is cancer of the lymph node, spleen, bone marrow, thymus, liver and other lymph tissue sites. These organs normally contain cells.

Called lymphocytes, these cells are like soldiers of the body that destroy and defend it against anything foreign (called antigen) whether viruses, bacteria, parasites or any nonliving object like a splinter. Just like any soldier, they undergo special training and schooling.

2 schools

In the body, there are two main schools for lymphocytes: bone marrow and thymus. If they undergo training at the bone marrow they become B lymphocytes, usually stationed in the blood; if training is done at the thymus they become T lymphocytes stationed at various tissues of the body.

B lymphocytes assist in identifying antigens in the blood so they can be immobilized, transported and destroyed at the spleen; those at tissues are transported and destroyed at the lymph nodes with the aid of T lymphocytes. Lymphocytes occupy a special position in the organization of the immune system and perform certain functions.

B lymphocytes can also become plasma cells, the operations and production managers of the immune system that produce and control the inventory of the antibodies, the supreme weapon of antigen destruction.

However, some of these B lymphocytes get out of control and eventually replicate excessively thus destabilizing their initial stations—the lymphatic organs of the entire body, and then the entire body. They virtually become scalawags, degenerating and becoming threat to life. By this time, lymphoma has developed in the body.

These scalawag lymphoma cells are destroyed using combination chemotherapy. The standard treatment for lymphoma is CHOP (cyclophosphamide, hydroxydoxorubicin, vincristine, and prednisone). This protocol is quite effective but has side effects similar to other cytotoxic chemotherapy drugs. They

kill rapidly dividing cells, whether cancerous or normal. This explains the drug side effects. As an analogy, in handling the scalawags, some innocent soldiers may get caught inadvertently in the line of fire.

Managing lymphomas

Some lymphomas are recurrent. Some are slow-growing and are resistant to cytotoxic drugs. Continuous improvements in bio-molecular diagnostic and treatment methods have proved helpful in the management of lymphomas, and these are available in the Philippines.

These lymphocyte scalawags have characteristic immunobiological markers like CD1, CD2, or CD20. CD1, CD2 are found on lymphomatous T cells of the skin; such T cell lymphoma can respond to interferon treatment.

CD20 is found on the surface of more than 85 percent of cancerous B cells but not on normal mature plasma, memory or normal tissue cells. Special biotechnology drugs such as rituximab can identify the CD20 marker on this 85 percent of cancerous B cell, and induces this scalawag cell to self-destruct in the process of apoptosis.

CD20-containing cancer cells are then eradicated from the body without causing much toxicity to normal cells. After apoptosis, normal B cells will reemerge to repopulate lymphatic organs. Lymphoma now is even more treatable with monoclonal antibodies.

Consult your doctor if you think you have scalawag lymphocytes in your body.

Children can handle contact lenses, say US researchers

CHILDREN as young as 8 can handle the responsibility of wearing contact lenses, US researchers reported, opposing conventional wisdom of optometrists that children under 12 should not use lenses.

A three-month study of 10 nearsighted children showed nine of them handled daily disposable contact lenses with little trouble, according to researchers writing in the Journal of Optometry and Vision Science.

"Many parents don't realize that their 8-year-old child can handle the responsibility of contact lenses, so they don't think to ask," said Jeffrey Walline, an optometry researcher at Ohio State University.

"But the children in our study wore contacts without relying on their parents to put them in and take them out."

The researchers said they used daily disposable lenses to relieve the children of the need to clean and disinfect lenses.

Walline said optometrists don't recommend contact lenses for children younger than 12 because they believe they are not responsible enough to care for them. But studies have shown 8-year-olds can put them in and out without help from parents.

"We've seen similar results from larger studies of children this age who have used other types of contact lenses," Walline said in a statement.

"Many children are told that they can't wear contacts until they turn 12 or 13," he added. "But we already know that younger myopic children can wear rigid gas-permeable or soft contact lenses."

Myopia, or shortsightedness, usually begins around age 8. *Reuters*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Globe Platinum sports meet with the privileged set

THE HARDWORKING privileged members of Globe Platinum's exclusive set recently took time off from their busy schedules for a welcome breather to unwind and engage in their favorite sports activities. Globe Platinum got together with society's crème de la crème to swing some clubs and shoot some hoops in the spirit of friendly competition.

Globe Platinum teed off with Tower Club, one of the country's prestige clubs, at their annual President's Cup Golf Tournament at the Wack-Wack Golf and Country Club. Globe Platinum saw the gathering of the club's distinguished members comprised of society's who's-who as they showed their putting skills on the greens. Globe Platinum further enriched the connectivity means of Lito Colona and Agnes De Kok who both won the coveted Nokia 6220 during the raffle. Awarded as the tournament's Overall Champions were Roberto Tolentino and Francisco Wong.

Ivy League alumni put their thinking caps aside to don their sports caps for a different kind of challenge with Globe Platinum. Graduates of prominent universities and colleges such as Columbia, Cornell, Princeton, Fordham, NYU, Syracuse, Yale, Harvard, MIT, Georgetown, Northwestern University, Notre Dame, Stanford, and the universities of Boston, Chicago, California, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Virginia had their annual Summer Sportsfest at the Colegio San Agustin. The teams competed in fun games of basketball, softball, volleyball games and the amazing fun relay to claim victory. The participants got even more ecstatic when Globe Platinum raffled off two Panasonic GD55 handsets, which went to lucky Ivy Leaguers Cris Acosta and Dino Balgemino. At the end of the sports meet, team Boston emerged as the overall champion for the year.

GLOBE Platinum member Bob Labrador flashes his Globe Platinum card for exclusive freebies.

Next up, Globe Platinum partnered up with the country's finest universities, Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University to host the first ever Golf Fellowship held at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club. Armed with Globe Platinum caps, each team comprised of one golfer from each school braved the rains as they trekked three golf courses at the Eagle Ridge.

The Ateneans and La Sallians bonded to get the best net score at the fairways. The overall team champions, La Salle's Miguel Luis Besa and Ateneo's Wilfred Batara, proved that setting aside rivalry can lead to triumph after they bested the rest of the teams.

A few consummate golfers won a pair of Nokia 6600 handsets at the Globe Platinum sponsored holes. Walter Lacuesta and Francis dela Fuerte were lucky to have won the sought-after Globe Handyphone units drawn at hole #8 of the club's Norman Course whereas, from Dye Course hole # 17 it was the team of Rudy delos Reyes and Ronnie Yupangco. The pair of Pepe Lim and Lito Casals also won a pair of Nokia 6600 handsets from Globe Platinum at hole #8 of the Faldo Course. Other golfers who signed-up at the Globe Platinum booth vied for an enticing Nokia 6820, with Ronald Valdez winning the prize.

A SUNNY, golfing day at the fairways for Donald Felbaum, Roberto de Ocampo, Arnel del Rosario and Perry Morales.

Society's movers and shakers really work hard but they make sure that they play even harder. And when they do get the chance to take a break, they always do it in style, with perks and privileges exclusive only to Globe Platinum members. If you're already an existing Globe postpaid plan subscriber for at least twelve months with an average monthly usage of P4,000 and up (exclusive of taxes and adjustments) and with good credit standing, then you are eligible for Globe Platinum membership. You may also sign up to be a member by getting either a G-Plan or fully consumable G-Flex Plan at P5,000, P7,000, or P10,000 at any Globe Business Center or Hub. So you want to play hard? Then be part of the exclusive Globe Platinum circle now.

Entrepreneurship through Globe AutoloadMAX unveiled at OFW expo

THE DREAM of owning a business in the future would be one of the reasons why over 7 million Filipinos chose to work abroad. Most would plan on investing their hard-earned savings from their overseas stint to open a small business venture that would assure steady income and security for their families. Understanding the need to fulfill this dream, Globe Telecom has devised a business opportunity that will benefit the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their families through a new service campaign called Globe Kababayan - Mobile Services for the OFWs. This will help Filipino OFWs to become business entrepreneurs by simply becoming an AutoloadMAX retailer.

CONGRESSMAN Manuel 'Waykurat' Zamora (center) joins Globe's Kimmie Moreno (left) and Globe's Cleo Santos at the Globe Kababayan booth. Also in the picture (back row from left): AMWSLAI vice chair Col. Ricardo Nolasco Jr., Pamilyang OFW-SME Network Foundation Inc president George Arban Arriola, Pamilyang OFW-SME Network Foundation Inc vice president Philip Baldo and Globe's Francis Ramon Tioseco.

Globe's head of wireless sales and distribution for overseas mobile services, Cleo Santos explained the potential of AutoloadMAX as a source of extra income for OFW families during the recent three-day OFWs and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Expo and Pamilyang OFWs-SME Congress, held at the Mega Trade Hall of SM Megamall from July 16 to 18. She said that by availing of an AutoloadMAX retailer SIM, they can expect to earn an average of P5,000 a month by simply selling Globe Prepaid and Touch Mobile credits to neighbors and friends.

Globe's head for overseas mobile services Alan Supnet says that by becoming an AutoloadMAX retailer, many will lessen their dependency on remittances from their loved ones abroad. This small reloading business will also help plant the seed of what may become a thriving business venture in the future.

Turning OFWs into entrepinoys is proof of Globe Kababayan's ongoing commitment to giving only the most innovative services that mutually benefit both the contract workers abroad and their families back here in the Philippines. By cultivating entrepreneurship, Globe Kababayan hopes that one day, families will no longer have to be separated due to economic reasons.

DMA PHILIPPINES' ULTIMATE SECRET IS OUT

The first-ever conference of the DMA Philippines was opened last Aug. 4 at the Grand Ballroom of Hotel InterContinental Manila with no less than the vice president for International Business of US Postal Service (4th from right) James Wade leading the ribbon cutting ceremonies together with DMA Philippines president Myrna Alcantara, VP for allied marketing channels division of Insular Life and Sweden Post Worldwide director Esa Tielinen. Others in photo are DMAP officers and directors (front row, from left): Asian Institute of Management professor Jose Miranda, Spring Country manager May Antonia Sinnung, and BPI Family Bank AVP Mary Anne Tolentino, conference chair. Back row (from left): Gimenez Group Managing director Jimmy Gimenez, AZ Access Phils president Felipe Hidalgo Jr, FY Interactive Inc president Fidel Yuboco, A-Z Direct Marketing president Lirio Sandoval, and Direct Link country general manager and DMA Phils director Arlene Martinez.

DDB-EU TREATMENT & REHAB CENTER CELEBRATES 12TH YEAR

The DDB-EU Treatment & Rehabilitation Center celebrated its 12th anniversary last July 30, together with the Association Of Families Against Drug Abuse (Afada Inc) with Jose Calida, DDB executive director as special guest. In photo are DDB and Afada officers (from left): Nolan Cabrera, VP; Karina Casinares, treasurer; Emelinda Abugan, Sped teacher; Gigi Libby, auditor; Adel Tolentino, counselor; Dr. Sarah Bellossillo, acting chief, DDB-TR Division; Lydia R. Litiatco, center director; Arlene Escalada, secretary; Dr. Antonio Policarpio, DDB medical specialist II. Not in the picture is Afada president, Bituin Ayalin.

CRAYOLA: CELEBRATING 100 COLORFUL YEARS

In the Philippines, crayons are synonymous to Crayola. And who among us Filipinos didn't get the chance to use Crayola during our younger years? Indeed, Crayola crayons bring back happy childhood memories. Celebrating 100 colorful years global, Crayola in the Philippines through its exclusive manufacturer and distributor Amalgamated Specialties Corp (Amspec) conducted a nationwide art competition. With the objective of recognizing talents among children, the contest was conducted and best artworks were awarded. The judging of artworks was done at Museo Pambata with Jerry McFadden and Douglas Smith of Binney & Smith USA and Australia, respectively, Charina Sta. Maria and Geraldine Laygo of Amspec and Madonna B. del Mundo of Museo Pambata as judges. The event was also graced by Amspec top management led by Rolland R. Thompson, president, Eliseo S. Laqui Jr, executive vice president and Branden B. Thompson, assistant vice president. The activity was formally opened by Amspec marketing manager Antonette Ravana-Severino. Other guests included friends from media the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, Manila Bulletin, Today, Vanity Magazine, ABS-CBN Channel 2, ABC 5 and UNTV Channel 37.

BACANI TAKES OATH OF OFFICE

Rep. Rudy Bacani is being sworn into office as representative of the 4th district of Manila by Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide. Witnesses in the oath-taking are his brother, Most Rev. Teodoro Bacani Jr., and his sister Lucia Quimson. Bacani is now on his third term as undefeated congressman of the said district.

Take charge of your life now with Insular Life's I-Fund

IF YOU are working, maintaining an 8 to 5 job five or six times a week in order to provide amply for your future, chances are, eventually, it will take its toll on you. Unless you decide to take a break from time to time, the pressure that comes with your job, as well as your desire to fulfill your goals, may eventually take over what should be a normally peaceful existence. So in order to keep your sanity intact, you decide to take a breather, head to your favorite beauty salon or spa, and have your beauty treatment. But let's face it; the satisfaction you get from this doesn't last forever. After having a facial, a hot oil treatment, a Swedish massage, or a milk bath, you would have to face the reality that you would have to go back to your work the next day. After all, your future depends largely on your ability to keep working during the prime of your life. And so the cycle continues on until you reach the mandatory age of retirement of 60 or 65.

But who says you can't take charge of your life now? Insular Life's I-Fund gives you a chance to live a life of ease so you can enjoy life now. I-Fund is a life insurance plan with a pension component, payable in just 5 short years. At the end of the 8th year until the end of the 14th year, you will receive a pension benefits that can go as high as 20 percent of your insured amount. What's more, when the policy matures at the end of the 15th year, you will receive a lump sum amount equivalent to the insured amount, which you may use to start a business, travel with your special someone, or use in a emergency situation that calls for immediate funds.

However, should the inevitable happen to you on the first four policy years, your beneficiaries will receive 100 percent of the insured amount, 200 percent of the face amount plus the dividend credits, if any, should something happen between the 5th to the 15th policy year.

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4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
5 GARFIELD 11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
6 ALONG CAME POLLY 10:30, 12:40, 2:50, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40
7 DEAD PEOPLE 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8 ELLA ENCHANTED 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
9 CATWOMAN 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
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3 GARFIELD 10:30, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:05
4 MAKAMUNDO 11:15, 1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40
5 DEAD PEOPLE 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
6 COLLATERAL 10:50, 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
7 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:40

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1 I, ROBOT 11:20, 1:40, 6:20, 9:00
2 COLLATERAL 11:20, 2:10, 5:00, 7:50, 10:35
3 GARFIELD 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 8:50, 10:35
4 CATWOMAN 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:20, 10:35
5 DEAD PEOPLE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 11:10, 1:40, 4:10, 6:40, 9:10
7 COLLATERAL 11:55, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25
8 MAKAMUNDO 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00

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1 GARFIELD 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
2 CATWOMAN 10:15, 12:45, 3:15, 5:45, 8:30
3 I, ROBOT 12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30
4 ALONG CAME POLLY 10:50, 12:50, 2:45, 4:40, 6:35, 8:30
5 COLLATERAL 12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30
6 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 11:00, 12:55, 2:50, 4:45, 6:40, 8:35
7 MAKAMUNDO 11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40
8 KING ARTHUR 11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40

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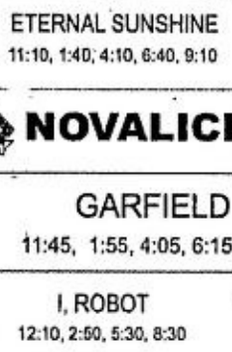
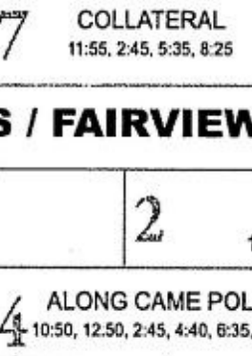
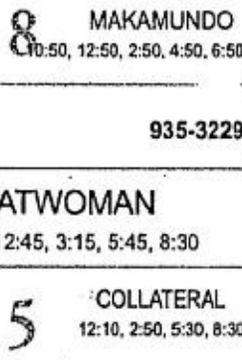

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3 GARFIELD 11:05, 1:15, 3:25 5:35, 7:45, 10:00 GP
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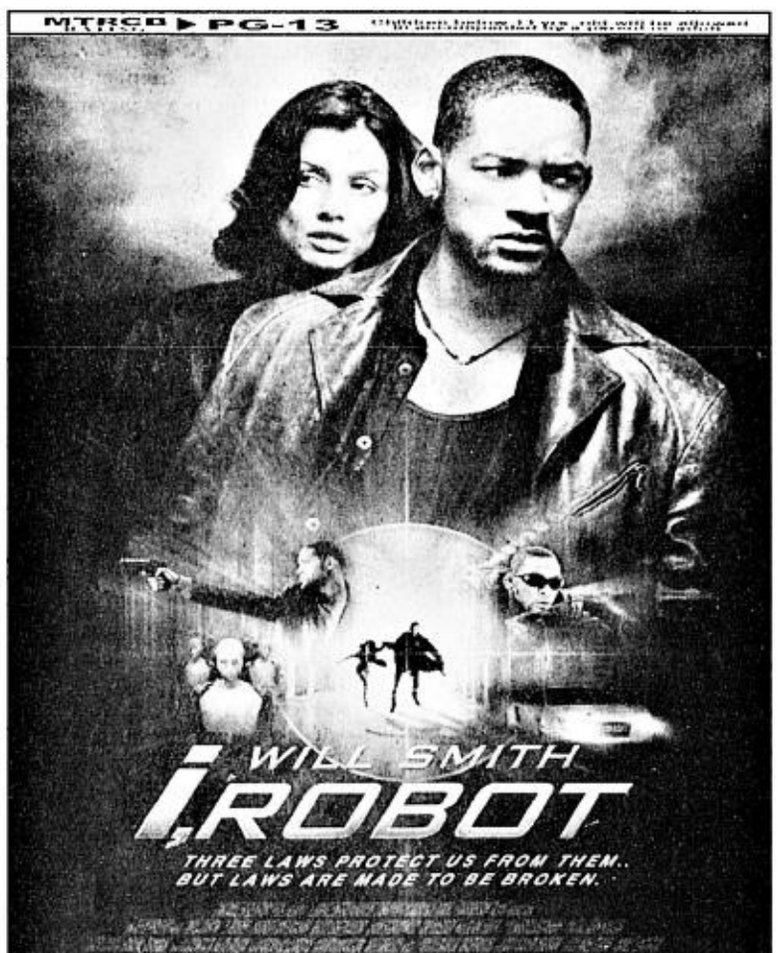

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX
3 COLLATERAL 10:00 am 12:40 pm 3:25 pm 6:10 pm 8:55 pm
4 GARFIELD 12:25 pm 2:35 pm 4:45 pm 6:55 pm 9:05 pm
5 CATWOMAN 12:00 nn 2:15 pm 4:30 pm 6:45 pm 9:00 pm
6 ETERNAL SUNSHINE 11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm
7 DEAD PEOPLE 11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm

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EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MAKAMUNDO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

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A	MAKAMUNDO
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1, 2 & 3	GARFIELD / COLLATERAL / CATWOMAN
PREMIERE THEATRE	COLLATERAL

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	GHOST HOUSE (RE-ISSUE)
CINEMA-2	PERLAS
CINEMA-3	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	PRINCE & ME
CINEMA-6	KILL BILL VOL. 2
CINEMA-7	WEREWOLF
CINEMA-8	LIBERATED 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	I ROBOT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-12	KING ARTHUR
CINEMA-14	ALONG CAME POLLY
CINEMA-15	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	SPIDERMAN 2
CINEMA-1	LADY KILLERS
CINEMA-2	I ROBOT
CINEMA-4	RESERVED

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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100836	Car Make Over	Derek
100837	Driving Lesson	Derek
100838	Old School	Rosanne
100839	One on One	Rosanne
100840	Lost A Bet	Bianca
100841	Working Out	Bianca
100842	Shopping or Yoga?	Bianca / Rosanne
100843	Double Date	Bianca / Rosanne
100846	I Need My Fix	Borgy
100847	I'm Hooked	Borgy
100851	Late for the Party	Derek / Tim
100852	What a Drag	Derek / Tim
100853	Wild Party	Tim
100854	Surprise	Tim

TITLE	RING ID	TITLE	RING ID
Iris	100249	House party	100466
Unwell	100439	Turbulescense	100470
Never let you go	100434	Popular scene	100576
Come away with me	100241	Acid etched	100582
Just like a pill	100251	Breakneck speed	100583
I'm a slave 4 u	100248	Disturbed	100584
Nice to know you	100252	Razor blade	100590
Teenage dirtbag	100255	Severely twisted	100591
Bent	100240	Age of love 1	100748
Mad season	100432	Future is 1	100751
Tribal_afro_loopistic	100309	Holding onto nothing 1	100753
Bugaboo	100301	Lost forever 2	100756
Groovyjames_the_majordomo	100304	Mahadeva 1	100757
Heads_will_roll_and_rock	100305	Scaramanga 2	100760
Pulsing_pulsing_123	100306	Seduction 1	100761
Sexy_bellydancer	100307	Spaced out	100764
Bad trip pare	100286	The mian voyage	100765
Dance-01-bopping groove	100035	Waking up the sun 1	100766
Electronica-02-elastic	100186	Gun - machine - m16 - burst	100064
Dance-04-energetic	100266	44 Magnum revolver	100347
Dance-05-funky groove	100267	Helicopter	100353
Dance-06-hip groove	100268	Jet ski	100454
Electronica-01-dark	100269	Harley davidson	100449
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SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre ■ Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

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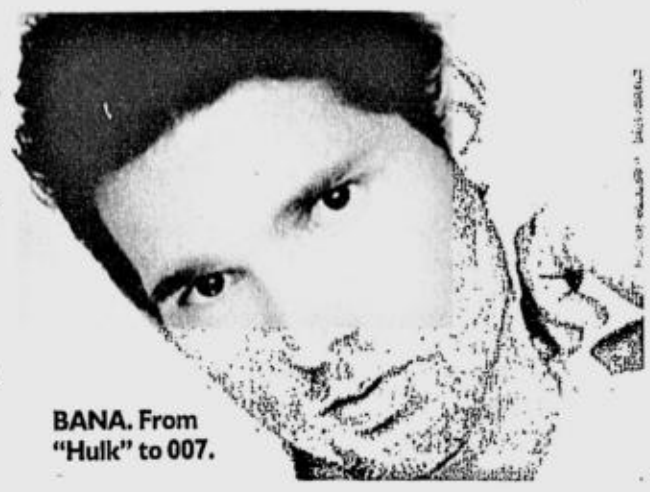
Eric Bana could be the new James Bond



BANA. From "Hulk" to 007.

LONDON— Eric Bana, star of "Hulk" and "Troy," is the surprise new choice to play as James Bond, a report said recently.

The beefy 35-year-old had beaten off competition from British actors such as Jude Law and Ewan McGregor to take over the role of the super-spy in the long-running film franchise, the News of the World said.

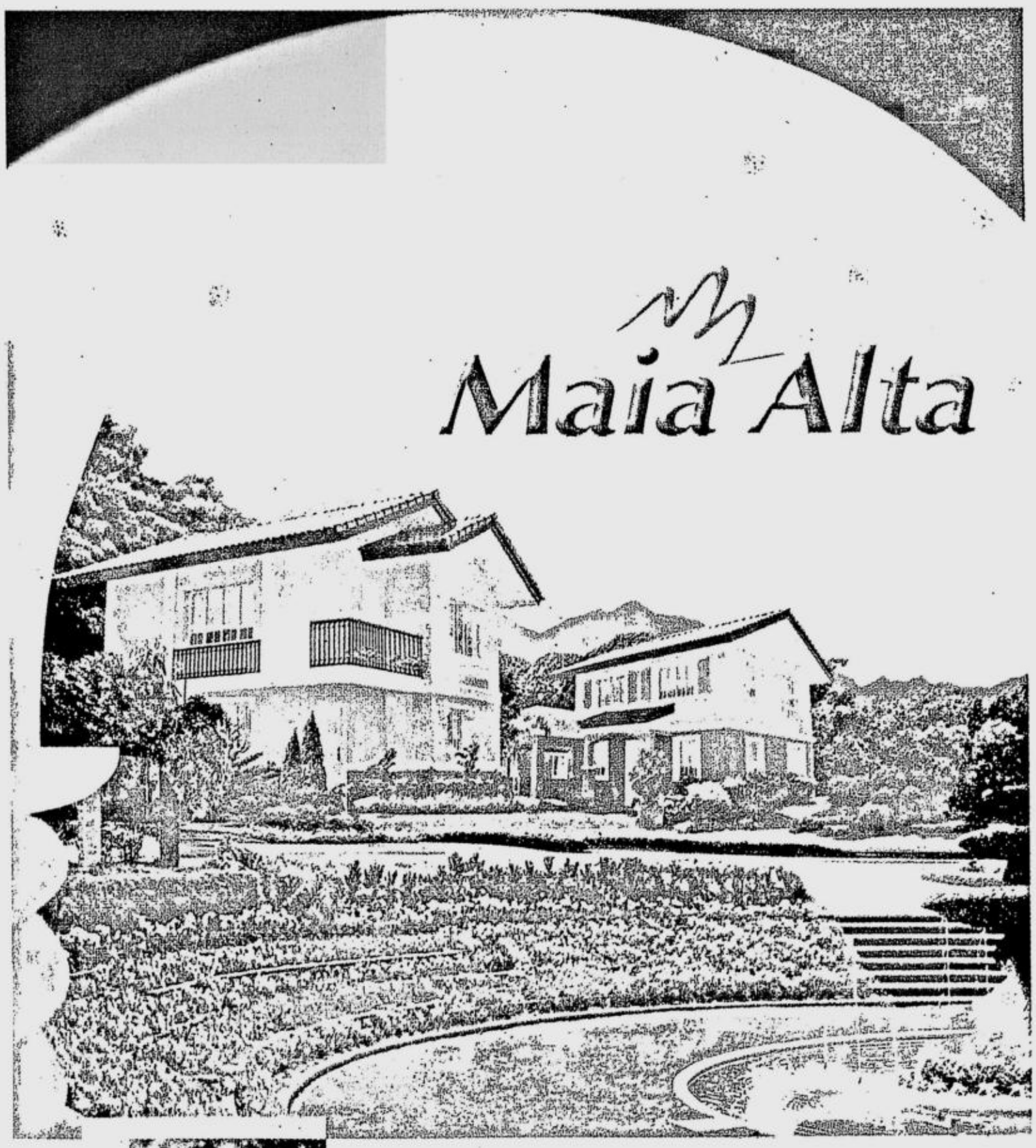
Current Bond, Irish actor Pierce Brosnan, has stepped down after four films following a row with producers, the Sunday tabloid title said.

21st title

Bana was still negotiating with the series' producers, but they were hopeful he would take over for the 21st title in the series, due to begin filming later this year.

"Eric is the guy they want but he has a reputation for being demanding. They want to modernize Bond and turn him into a youthful, suave, modern hero to compete with the likes of Spiderman and Keanu Reeves in 'The Matrix,'" the source said.

James Bond films, based on the novels of Ian Fleming, have proved hugely successful ever since the first title, 1962's "Dr No," which starred Sean Connery. *AFP*



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Via Marcos Highway- From Marcos Highway, turn right at the intersection (Masinag Market should be on your left). You're now on Sumulong Highway. Turn right on Circumferential Road. Go straight, then turn right when you reach the first Triangle mark. Go straight again, turn left when you see the second Triangle mark. Go straight. (You will arrive at the intersection with an I-Mart convenience store and a Wendy's restaurant on your left, and a Uniwide store on your right). Turn right to M.L. Quezon Ave. Turn left at Maia Alta drive and you're there!

Dina remains a powerful presence

By Jocelyn Valle

DINA is one of only a few above-40 actresses who remain a powerful presence on the small and big screens. She plays challenging roles in Gil Portes' "Beautiful Life" and in the teleserye, "Hiram."

"It reminds me of 'Steel Magnolias,'" she says of the Regal production.

Disparate personalities

"Steal Magnolias" tells the story of how friendship and tragedy bind a group of women with disparate personalities and persuasions.

"I'm the pessimist in the group," she says of her character, Carmen, who blames his son's girlfriend for his death. "She suddenly finds herself alone. Personally, I think we shouldn't fear death."

Dina is now focusing on "Hiram," which also stars Kris Aquino, Heart Evangelista, Anne Curtis and Geoff Eigenmann.

ABS-CBN started airing "Hiram" last July 12, earlier than scheduled, to avoid a vacuum in its primetime block, as "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas" had already concluded two days earlier.

Working on "Hiram," says Dina, has bridged her gap with Kris, who was once linked to her ex-husband Vic Sotto.

BONNEVIE. New talk show in the works.

Turbulence

It started a month ago, after the plane they boarded to Hong Kong survived a horrible turbulence, she recalls. (The characters they're playing worked in the former Crown Colony.)

Dina narrates that when the plane's condition stabilized, she went to the bathroom, but found it occupied. *"Merong matagal gumamit.* Then, Kris came out, and she asked me if I got scared during the turbulence. I realized that she was also concerned about me.

So, *sabi ko, 'Sige na nga,* Lord. *Ayaw ko ng kaaway,'"* she laughs.

Kris offered her clothes when Dina couldn't open her luggage, because Dina's assistant mistakenly took a tour bus and brought the key with her.

Later, it was Dina's turn to show concern for Kris when they were crossing a street in Hong Kong. *"Wala s'yang pakialam tumawid,"* she says of her co-star. "She was almost hit by a bus."

Close

"We're close now," she smiles. "But, when she taunts me about my age (42), I call her my little *baboy* (after Kris' character in the soap). *Pikunan kami!"*

Aside from "Hiram," ABS-CBN is reportedly giving Dina another project. The actress is mum about the details, but it's said to be a late-night talk show. Dina used to host a late-morning program on GMA 7 titled "Miss D."

Her contract with ABS-CBN doesn't prohibit her from appearing on Channel 7. "They're kind to me," she says of the people from her former network. *"Sana, hindi sila galit."*

Ingmar Bergman bids theater goodbye

By Nestor U. Torre

BERGMAN. Has opted for the lambent pleasures of retirement.

LAST week, we were saddened to hear that Swedish theater and film master Ingmar Bergman had put an end to his 70-year stage career, with his staging of Ibsen's "Ghosts" as his final production.

At 86, Bergman feels that he's said everything he wants to say in the theater. We disagree, but it's his artistic decision, of course.

Consolation

Our only consolation is that Bergman hasn't written *finis* to his filmmaking career. Well, he *has*, but happily enough, he hasn't kept his "word" in that regard.

In 1982, he declared that his latest movie, "Fanny and Alexander," was going to be his last film. But, as recently as late last year, he screened his new movie, "Saraband."

The thing is, it was shown on television, not in moviehouses. In a sense, therefore, Bergman hasn't broken his vow to leave the film world behind.

TV has also been the venue for some of Bergman's more significant productions, paced by his 1973 mini-series, "Scenes from a Marriage," which impressed viewers with its rigorously frank view of marital relations.

For our part, we'll take Bergman any way he wants, because he was a seminal influence on our initial interest in cinema.

Fantasy

We were fascinated by the unique combination of magic, fantasy and spirituality in his early works, like "Wild Strawberries" and "The Seventh Seal."

Later, his films acquired more flesh and blood, and went into a deeper exploration of the complex interstices of love. Thus, Bergman in his mid- and later periods was even more compelling and empathetic because he had become more vulnerably human, no longer just the mystic-magician he used to be.

This development has spared Bergman from the onus of inaccessibility that prevented other experimental film artists like Godard and Antonioni from reaching out to and being appreciated by the wider film audience.

Versatility

In Bergman's case, he has exceeded many of his contemporaries in terms of versatility and reach, due to his significant triune involvements in theater, film and television.

At 86, Bergman has every reason to opt for the lambent pleasures of retirement, which he richly deserves. But perhaps he will forgive his loyal followers for wanting even more from the film world's mystic-magician-lover, who has given them so many dazzling insights throughout his long and productive creative life.

Why we need a National Film Archive

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero

IN the face of chronic problems like poverty, unemployment and inadequate housing, why is there need for a National Film Archive?

Scriptwriter Doy del Mundo posed this question at the forum on Filipino films held recently at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Del Mundo, who wrote the screenplay for Lino Brocka's "Maynila: Sa Kuko ng Liwanag," supplied the answer:

Cultural heritage

"Mayroon tayong ipagmamalaki," he said. It will instill pride in being Filipino, *at malulutasan ang mga problema ng bayan."* The writer said it is not just the rich countries who have a national archive: There's India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Cuba. "It's part of cultural heritage," del Mundo added.

Archivists have long dreamed of a National Film Archive, and they formed a Task Force for this in 1998. Bills are now pending in Congress, but they have not made much headway.

"Economics is another thing," noted Ed Cabagnot, who heads the CCP's Film Division. "Can the Philippines afford it?"

The forum was part of CCP's monthly series, "Sining Taktakan." The interaction is between students, teachers, and a panel of specialists. "Action Points" generated will be collated.

DEL MUNDO. Stresses need to preserve cinematic heritage.

Forum

The last forum had for its theme the need to preserve film classics (footage from the restored "Noli Me Tangere" was shown).

Panelists included film critic Bienvenido Lumbera, archivists Mary del Pilar, Jo Atienza and Mack Junio; Jojo Labella, an independent film producer from Cebu; and Eric Maliwat, DZAS station manager.

There is no market for a copy of an old movie from, say, the archives of LVN, Sampaguita or ABS-CBN, the archivists pointed out. These are not mass-produced, and a copy would cost P800. The studios won't earn much from this, as there are few buyers. "Archiving is not a big enterprise," del Mundo said. "It will never be."

Thus, the need for a National Film Archive.

Students observed that Filipino movies are not "original," and are too influenced by Hollywood films, as in "Plastikman vs. Spiderman."

In reaction, Lumbera asserted, *"Walang pelikulang 'puro,' na hindi na*-influence *ng dayuhan.* Film is an international forum. The filmmaker is aware of what is going on abroad. A Filipino movie does not have to be set in fields and mountains. *Basta't gawa ng* Filipino industry, that's a Filipino film. Then, people classify it into commercial, quality or heritage films."

Pure Filipino

He advised: "Don't look for 'pure,' *walang* 'pure Filipino.' *Nakikipag-ugnayan yan sa ibang kultura. Ibang usapan ang tungkol sa estetika."*

CCP vice president Nanding Josef said that the problem was not just preserving old films, but "preserving our culture and heritage. We don't appreciate the old. We are attracted to what is new, and then, we forget it."

He called on the youth to have "a sense of common history, to appreciate the old *along with* the new. Talk to your elders, find out what the culture was in their time. Then, internalize and feel proud of it!"

Ralph Fiennes to play Voldemort in next 'Harry Potter' movie

LOS ANGELES—He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named has been named.

FIENNES. Portrays the wicked warlock.

Ralph Fiennes, who played memorable evil guys in "Red Dragon" and "Schindler's List," has signed on to portray the wicked warlock, Voldemort, in the next "Harry Potter" movie, Warner Bros. announced early this week.

Voldemort is so bad that the magical characters in author J.K. Rowling's stories do their best not to speak his name aloud.

Deadly magic spell

In the first three installments of the saga, a deadly magic spell meant for a baby Harry Potter backfired, and deprived him of a body.

So, only his spirit wrought havoc in "The Sorcerer's Stone," "The Chamber of Secrets" and the recent "Prisoner of Azkaban."

But, Voldemort finally returns in the flesh in part four: "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire."

Filming has been under way on "Goblet" since June 25, mainly with star Daniel Racliffe as the boy-wizard, and co-stars Rupert Grint and Emma Watson as his pals Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Fiennes has not yet filmed any scenes.

Fearsome

Other additions to the cast include Brendan Gleeson ("Troy," "The Village" and "Cold Mountain") as Potter's new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, the fearsome Mad-Eye Moody, and Miranda Richardson ("The Crying Game," "Sleepy Hollow"), as Rita Skeeter, a gossip columnist for a magical newspaper.

The cast also includes Robert Pattinson as Hogwarts student Cedric Diggory, Stanislav Ianevski as Quidditch star Viktor Krum, French actress Clemence Poesy as the heart-fluttering visiting student Fleur Delacour, and Katie Leung, as Potter's love-interest and Quidditch rival, Cho Chang.

"Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," directed by Mike Newell ("Four Weddings and a Funeral"), is scheduled for release in November 2005. *AP*

Creed breaks up after three albums

NEW YORK—The spiritually-inclined band Creed, whose anthemic hits, "Higher" and "With Arms Wide Open," helped them become one of the top-selling rock acts of the past decade, has called it quits.

Three former Creed members immediately announced they were forming a new band—minus singer Scott Stapp—but were quick to say it was not "just Creed with a different singer."

Creative fuel

Creed's three albums sold a combined 24 million copies in the United States. While many critics dismissed them as pale Pearl Jam imitators, Creed members used that as creative fuel and laughed all the way to the bank.

Lyricist Stapp grew up with a strict religious upbringing and often explored those topics in song. At one point, five of the first eight queries on the "frequently asked questions" section of the Florida-based band's website dealt with Christianity, including "Is Creed a Christian band?"

The band always said no.

Stapp and guitarist Mark Tremonti were longtime friends and songwriting partners whose relationship soured in the past couple of years, as Tremonti explained in a recent interview with MTV.com.

Tension

That caused tension in the band. "There was a lot more drama," drummer Scott Phillips recently told the Associated Press. "It wasn't necessarily created by anyone in particular. It just stopped being fun."

Stapp was not available for comment, said a spokesman for Wind-up Records.

Creed took most of last year off, and reconvened in the winter to come up with new material. "The vibe just wasn't the same," Phillips said.

Still, they weren't about to casually disband such a successful unit. The band had initially figured on taking a hiatus, but a side project was working out so well they decided not to turn back, Phillips said.

New band

The new band, Alter Bridge, features Tremonti, Phillips and former Creed bassist Brian Marshall. Singer-songwriter Myles Kennedy, formerly of the band Mayfield Four, was recruited as the fourth member. Their first album is due out later this month.

Phillips described the music as edgier than Creed, with the musicians given more space to show off their chops.

Stapp's first solo recording will be on a soundtrack of music inspired by the film, "The Passion of the Christ." He's working on a solo album with the Canadian band, Tea Party. *AP*

'Over the Rainbow' chosen top American movie tune

LOS ANGELES—There's no song like "Over the Rainbow."

Kansas farm girl Dorothy Gale's wistful ditty in "The Wizard of Oz" led the American Film Institute's recently released list of 100 best movie songs, followed by "As Time Goes By" from "Casablanca" at No. 2 and the title tune from "Singin' in the Rain" at No. 3.

"Over the Rainbow," sung by Judy Garland in the 1939 musical fantasy, was picked as the top song in US cinema in voting by about 1,500 actors, filmmakers, writers, critics and others in Hollywood.

Emotion

"The song deserves it. It's one of the great, great songs. Judy Garland, the emotion in that song—it gives me chills whenever I hear it," said Burt Bacharach, who was represented on the list for co-writing "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" (No. 23) from "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "Arthur's Theme (Best That You Can Do)" (No. 79) from "Arthur."

In 2001, Garland's "Over the Rainbow" (and Bing Crosby's "White Christmas") also topped the 365 "Songs of the Century," selected by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Recording Industry Association of America.

The rest of AFI's top 10: No. 4. "Moon River," from "Breakfast at Tiffany's"; No. 5 "White Christmas," from "Holiday Inn"; No. 6 "Mrs. Robinson," from "The Graduate"; No. 7 "When You Wish Upon a Star" from "Pinocchio"; No. 8 "The Way We Were," from "The Way We Were"; No. 9 "Stayin' Alive," from "Saturday Night Fever"; No. 10. "The Sound of Music," from "The Sound of Music."

Two other songs made the list from both "The Sound of Music" ("My Favorite Things" at No. 64 and "Do Re Mi" at No. 88) and "Singin'-in the Rain" ("Make 'Em Laugh" at No. 49 and "Good Morning" at No. 72). "West Side Story" also landed three songs: "Somewhere" (No. 20), "America" (No. 35) and "Tonight" (No. 59).

100 nominees

Chosen from 400 nominees, the list was announced in the CBS television special "AFI's 100 Years . . . 100 Songs," the institute's latest countdown to promote US film history. The show's host was John Travolta, star of "Saturday Night Fever" and "Grease," whose "Summer Nights" came in at No. 70.

GARLAND. Sang classic theme song of "The Wizard of Oz."

"A list like this really drives people back to rediscover or discover these movies," said Jean Picker Firstenburg, the institute's director. "It's about older generations revisiting them and younger generations finding them for the first time."

Past specials presented such lists as the best 100 American movies, comedies, screen legends and love stories. AFI leaders had been mulling a list of best movie songs for years.

"It's an idea we've had floating around since the beginning," said Bob Gazzale, who produces the AFI specials. "Movies and music are so obviously linked at the heart. Even before sound came to films, there were songs that went with silent pictures, as well."

The earliest song to make the list was "Isn't It Romantic" (No. 73), sung by Maurice Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald in 1932's "Love Me Tonight." The newest came from 2002 with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Renee Zellweger's rendition of "All That Jazz" (No. 98) from "Chicago" and Eminem's "Lose Yourself" (No. 93) from "8 Mile."

Integral

Unlike the Academy Awards, which honors songs written specifically for new movies, the AFI list allowed any tune integral to a movie.

So, songs such as "It Had to Be You" (No. 60) from "When Harry Met Sally..." and "Ain't Too Proud to Beg" (No. 94) from "The Big Chill" made the cut.

Other tunes ranged from sublime with Paul Robeson's "Ol' Man River (No. 24) from the 1936 version of "Show Boat" and Garland's "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" (No. 76) from "Meet Me in St. Louis" to the goofy, with "Springtime for Hitler" (No. 80) from Mel Brooks' "The Producers" and Gene Wilder and Peter Boyle's wacky rendition of "Puttin' on the Ritz" (No. 89) from Brooks' "Young Frankenstein."

Blockbuster

Songs came from blockbusters ("My Heart Will Go On" from "Titanic" at No. 14, and "Unchained Melody" from "Ghost" at No. 27) and from counterculture flicks ("Born to Be Wild" from "Easy Rider" at No. 29, and "Aquarius" from "Hair" at No. 33).

"This list is about music that has made its way into daily lives, rather than an assessment of what's great," said Jennifer Warnes, who sang two duets that made the list, "Up Where We Belong" (No. 75) from "An Officer and a Gentleman" and "(I've Had) The Time of My Life" (No. 86) from "Dirty Dancing."

"The reason why my songs made it there is that they're used. I still hear 'Up Where we Belong' when I'm at the store buying frozen peas, and it makes me happier to be buying frozen peas." *AP*

George Lucas expands his film empire

By Fayen Wong

SINGAPORE—George Lucas, the creator of blockbuster films such as "Star Wars" and "Raiders of the Lost Ark," recently announced plans to bring his creative empire to Singapore in the first overseas foray by his entertainment group, Lucasfilm Ltd.

Lucasfilm Ltd. is setting up a venture with Singapore's government that will specialize in digital animation for films, television and video games — the company's first collaboration with a government body.

LUCAS. Digital animation venture with Singapore.

Creativity

The Hollywood studio's arrival comes as Singapore is embracing creativity to sustain its economy. Arts are now a cornerstone of economic policy in a country better known for censoring media than promoting it.

Under a "Media 21" policy rolled out last year, Singapore plans to double the size of its media, design and arts industries to contribute three percent of its $93 billion economy by 2012.

"We look to Lucasfilm as a queen bee of sorts to help develop our industry," Teo Ming Kian, chairman of Singapore's Economic Development Board, told a news conference.

Investment

"As an investor, we look to very good returns from this investment, but we see far more strategic returns to Singapore."

Micheline Chau, chief operating officer of Lucasfilm, said Singapore was picked ahead of competing Asian countries because of its strong intellectual property rules.

"What was very important to us was the commitment to protect intellectual property rights, since we are a content producer."

Intellectual property laws

Under the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement that took effect in January, the wealthy city-state's intellectual property laws were harmonized with those of the United States.

The Asian animation unit, which is looking to hire about 300 people for its Singapore operations, will focus on production work, while the design and writing of scripts will continue to be done in the United States.

Lucasfilm owns 75 percent of the venture, while a Singapore consortium, led by the Economic Development Board, holds the rest. No financial terms were announced.

The government said last month it had set aside about S$200 million ($117 million) over five years to develop Singapore into a "vibrant Asian creative hub".

In December, Singapore earmarked S$100 million to develop documentaries and films, with a goal to produce up to five low-budget films a year. A new city neighbourhood designed for media companies, dubbed "Fusionpolis," is now being built. *Reuters*

HD is the future of cinema

By Rica Arevalo

WHEN George Lucas decided to go digital with "Star Wars, Episode I: The Phantom Menace," people started to welcome the wonders of digital filmmaking. Recently, Angora Films' "U-Belt" was shot using high definition (HD) camera.

I encountered HD technology through the Pinoykamera egroup. Because of the busy schedule of cinematographers, Neil Daza came up with an idea to hook up with fellow cinematographers via the web.

Growing interest

For decades, there has been a growing interest in marrying the video and film formats. Film has the highest resolution of any media format. Traditionally, most films are shot at 24 frames per second. On the other hand, video always runs at around 30 (29.97). —Then came the birth of HD.

The new technology, 24P, allows you to finish your video project in a single 24 frame-per-second environment, and creates a single master that can be used to produce everything else you'll need: all the HD formats, NTSC, PAL, and film.

Sony, JVC and Panasonic are selling HD cameras in the market. The primary reason to shoot in HD is to save money by not using negatives. But, the transfer of video to film in post production is still quite expensive.

Award-winning cinematographer Lee Meily shares, "HD should be treated as a format that will suit some materials. It is definitely better than video."

Digital fever

HD is the future of cinema. Digital fever is sweeping the country. The coming Cinemalaya film festival is giving grants to digital shorts and features. Expect young filmmakers to push the HD technology with their daring works!

Around the world, the coming of HD DVD, or high-definition DVD, is long-awaited by consumers. It allows recording of more than eight hours of high-resolution films on a single-ROM disc.

Expect HD DVD titles of your favorite movies to reach your homes in 2005!

Christensen thrilled to play Darth Vader

SAN DIEGO—Hayden Christensen, who played Anakin Skywalker in "Star Wars: Episode II: Attack of the Clones," had one conflict with the filmmakers about playing Skywalker's alter ego, Darth Vader, in the upcoming "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith."

"Unfortunately, I didn't get to keep the costume," he said.

CHRISTENSEN. Excited to put on dark helmet.

Villain's lore

Christensen immersed himself in the villain's lore, and became such an expert at lightsaber dueling that he asked the makers of an upcoming tie- in video game to change his digital character's stance to better reflect Vader's fighting style.

"It was overwhelming," he said of playing Vader. "That has always been the exclamation mark in the back of my head throughout this entire process. Getting to put on the dark helmet and walk onstage as Vader—it was orgasmic!" *AP*

Hanks, Spielberg to open Venice filmfest

ROME—Tom Hanks and Stephen Spielberg will be among the big names at this year's star-studded Venice International Film Festival, which opens with their latest collaboration, "Terminal," festival director Marco Muller announced.

The 21 films in competition for the prestigious Golden Lion award at next month's event include US director Jonathan Glazer's "Birth," Mira Nair's "Vanity Fair" and Wim Wenders' "Land of Plenty."

Reincarnation

"Birth," in which Nicole Kidman plays a woman convinced that a 10-year-old boy is the reincarnation of her dead husband, teams the Australian actress with one of the divas of Hollywood's golden age, Lauren Bacall.

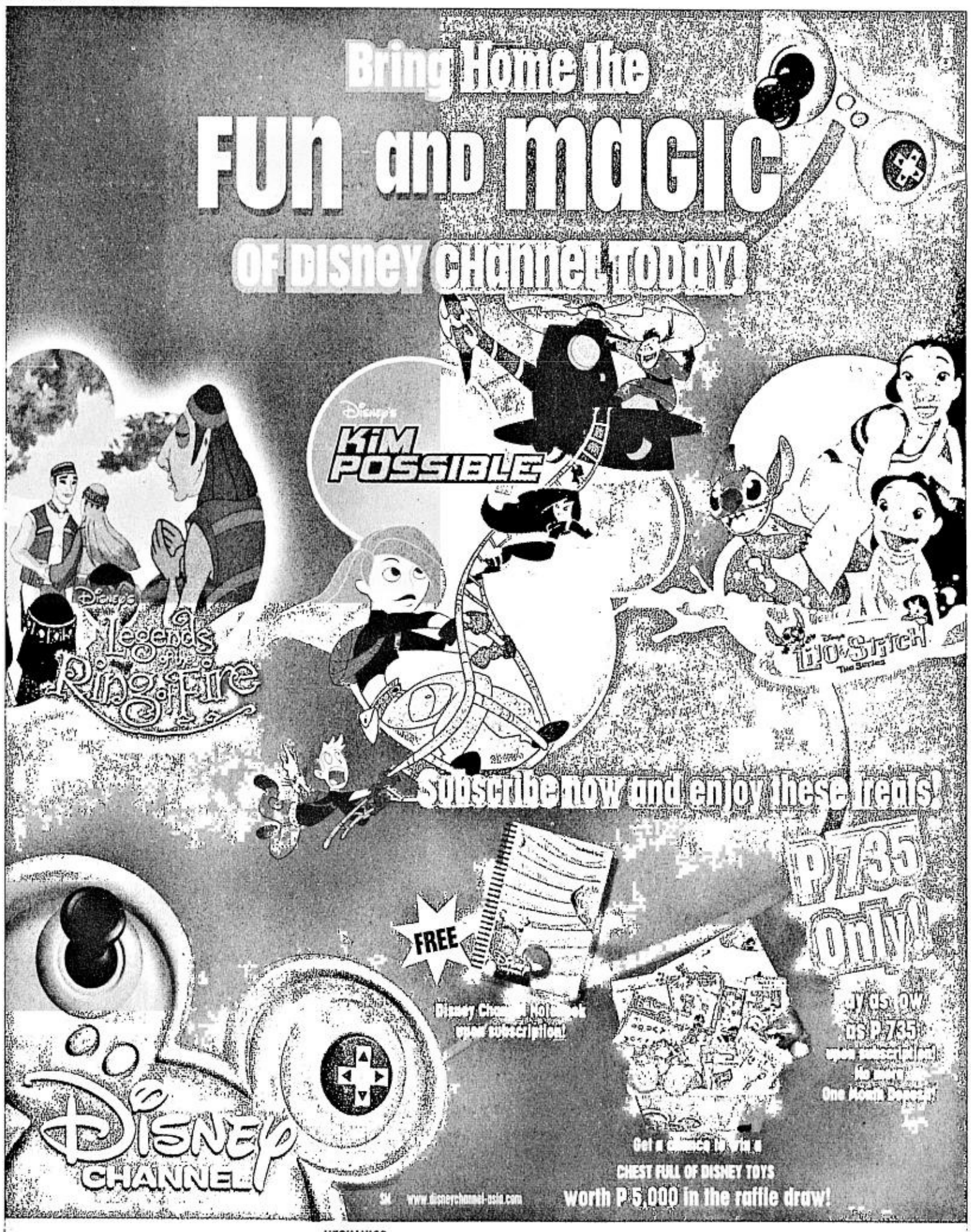
Around half the films in competition are European, with the rest mostly American and Asian.

"Our consideration was to select the best and not to make our choices based on where a film was made," said Muller.

Surprise

Another surprise is the new Mezzanotte (midnight) section, which Muller says, promises "high-impact spectaculars." That list includes Michael Mayer's "A Home at the End of the World," starring Colin Farrell and Kerry Conran's "Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow," with Jude Law and Gwyneth Paltrow.

Portuguese Manoel de Oliveira will receive a special career award. A second Golden Lion will be presented to Stanley Donen, who directed "Singin' in the Rain" in 1952. *AFP*



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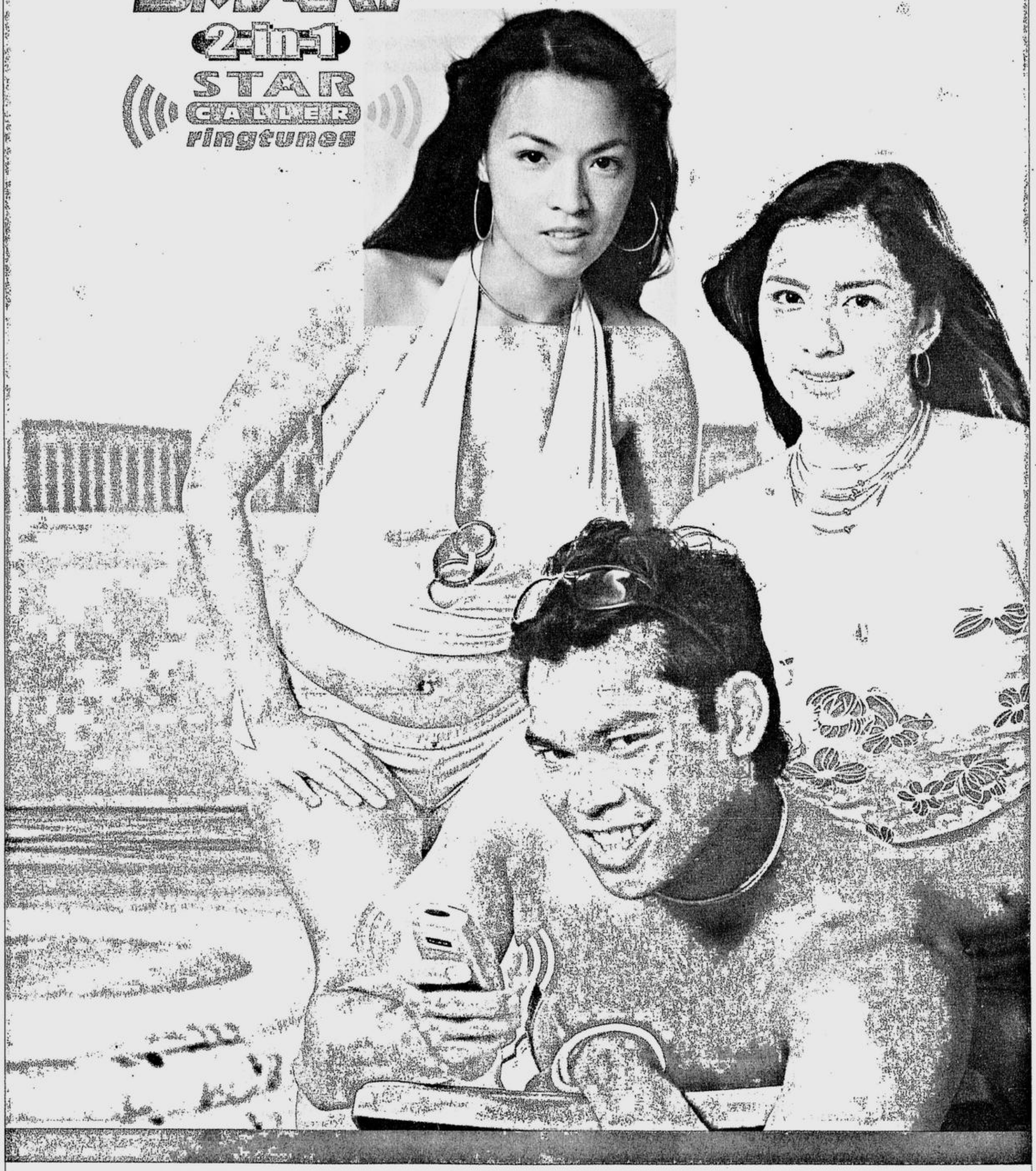

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Top directors still dote on Amy Austria

AUSTRIA. Consistent quality and complete believability.

By Nestor U. Torre

AMY Austria may no longer be regarded as a major bankable star, but she continues to contribute insightful and inspired performances to many significant films. So, we can rightfully ask, "What would Filipino movies do without Amy?" Good question!

We have quite a number of gifted veteran actresses, but why is it that our directors invariably opt to work with Amy in their most important projects?

Most impressive

Marilou Diaz Abaya in "Bagong Buwan," Maryo delos Reyes in "Magnifico," and Mario O'Hara in "Babae sa Breakwater" are only three of our better directors who dote on Amy, thus enabling her to come up with one of the most impressive filmographies in the business.

This is quite an achievement, especially when you factor in the fact that some industry people think that Amy is past her stellar prime.

But, that's neither here nor there. On point of consistent quality and complete believability, Amy can't be beat. So, what's to stop a daring filmmaker to buck the industry's dependence on bankable stars, and cast Amy in a challenging lead role in his next production?

What a brilliant viewing treat that would be, and how it would turn the industry on its ear if viewers would support it and make it a sleeper hit! —We trust that we've planted a creatively and profitably buzzing bee in some canny indie producer's ear—and the line for Amy's stellar services forms to the right!

Youthful projection

Aside from her exceptional talent, a major asset Amy has is her relatively youthful projection. Thus, the versatile actress is able to believably play a wide range of characters aged from their late 20s to their 50s, making her a director's dream performer.

Amy's latest vehicle, "Beautiful Life," is a sometimes messy viewing proposition, but very true to form, Amy's performance in it comes off as the film's best.

It's also the most challenging portrayal in the film, because most of the actresses in the movie play relatives of victims of a terrorist bombing raid, while Amy is cast in the radically different role of the terrorist's mother.

It's a truly challenging part, because it's very difficult to make a character like that come off sympathetically. And yet, Amy is so gifted and perceptive that she manages to pull off that near-impossible feat, and ends up quietly running away with the movie.

Superlative acting

The operative word is: quietly. That's the way Amy works her thespic magic on audiences, with practically none of the hysterics, melodramatic flourishes and diva-esque emotionalizing that we usually see on local film screens.

Instead of displaying her brilliance as an actress, Amy chooses to concentrate on understanding the character she's playing so well that she can just *be* her, rather than acting up a storm to impress the impressionable.

This no-fuss, no-nonsense thespic approach may strike some viewers as lacking in "color," "highlights" and "temperament," but people who know superlative acting when they see it are most appreciative of Amy's more subtle and natural approach.

Smooth grooves in new albums

By Rito P. Asilo

McKNIGHT. Divine guidance in a world of material excess.

IF you're tired of Kanye West's smart hip-hop semantics or Prince's funky, provocative riffs, we recommend two distinctive albums that will calm you down after a hard day's work: 12 Girls Band's "Shining Energy" and Wave 89.1's "Dreamsounds" compilation.

Interestingly, the lush sound that emanates from 12 Girl Band's second album, "Shining Energy," comes from the unique musicality of 12 beautiful, young musicians recruited from China's elite music academies.

Traditional instruments

These girls render tunes that you may have heard before, but what sets them apart is their use of traditional instruments like the erhu (a two-string fiddle), pipa (a pear-shaped, flute-like contraption that has four strings), yangqin (a harpsichord) and the zheng (a 17-string zither) to put a world-music quality to familiar strains.

The 15-track CD is not patently Chinese, it's

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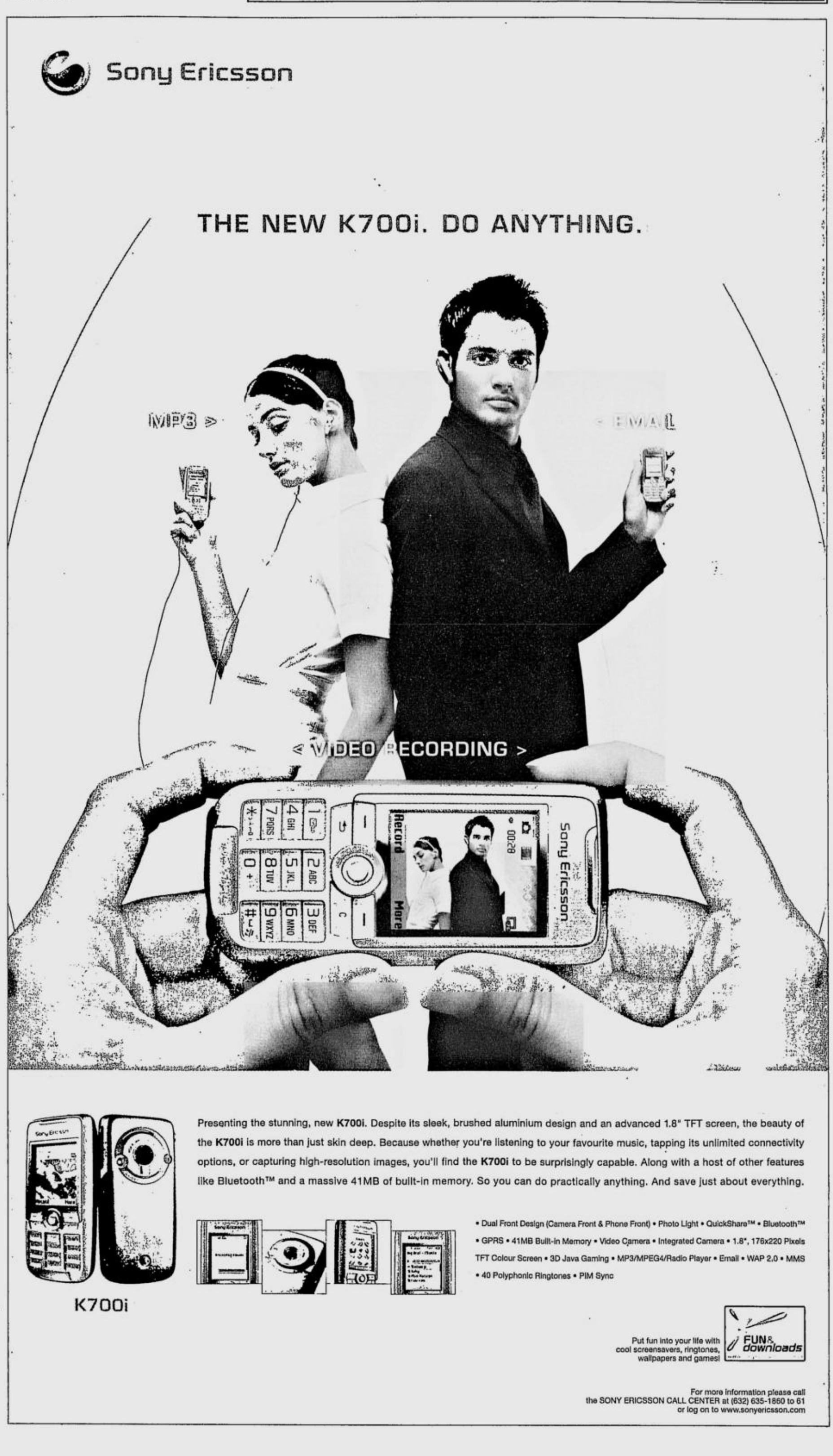

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have two sides. As a public performer, you are always aware of the impression you create on others. However, you can be very private and secretive as well. In fact, you love mysteries. Sometimes, you surprise others by your frankness. You always know your audience. An important choice awaits you this year. Choose carefully.
Birthdate of: Charlize Theron, actress; David Duchovny, actor; Stan Freberg, comedian.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a lovely day for creativity and fanciful escape through arts and crafts. Romance and flirtations might confuse you, however. Tread carefully!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Discussions with parents and family members are confusing. Someone might withhold information or try to hide something. In fact, this someone might be you!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today is full of woolgathering and daydreaming. Your mind keeps drifting off to pleasant places. It's a good day for writing poetry, lyrics and fiction.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're tempted to spend money on something luxurious today. However, some of you are tempted to spend money rescuing someone who seems to be in need. Be careful.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might think that someone dislikes you or is critical of you. Actually, it's your own self-doubt that is creating this feeling within you. Just shrug it off—it's no big deal. (It'll be gone by tomorrow.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): There is very little difference between happiness and depression, because they both come and go. Be soft and gentle with yourself. Nobody is perfect, including you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might feel inferior to a friend today. One of the greatest confusions we all suffer from is assuming that others are happy, confident and have their act together. (Not true!)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Someone in a position of authority might deceive you today. It could be intentional; it could be innocent. Either way, you have to keep your eyes open!

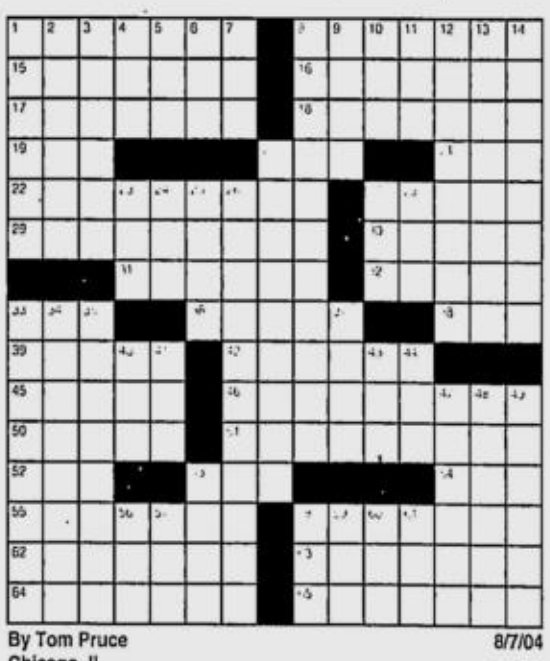
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be careful with drugs and alcohol today, because they could reinforce negative tendencies that are already in the air. Even allergic reactions to food are possible now.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you have to settle debts or share something with someone today, be careful. You can't see the whole picture. Someone might hide things from you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Dealings with others are definitely confused today. You're not sure whether to act or not. Just do nothing if you can. (This confusion is within you.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): A new health regimen might be appealing, but is it practical? You could be suckered into buying something that promotes your health but is actually completely worthless.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

8/7/04

ACROSS
1 Vatican chapel
8 Held onto
15 Lured
16 Turn back
17 Peachtree and Basin
18 Lamentation poet
19 Punter's digit
20 Wages
21 West of "My Little Chickadee"
22 Stored fodders
27 Follows orders
29 Declaration under oath
30 Dock device
31 Followers of Zeno
32 Eradicate
33 Tea for deux?
36 Cuts short
38 Inc. in Islington
39 Washer cycle
42 Dismal
45 Mrs. Fred Mertz
46 Skin ailment
50 George Bernard and Robert
51 Distinctive facial contour
52 Writer's tool
53 Prohibition
54 Mystery writer Grafton
55 Antiquated
58 Passenger's payment
62 Spire holder
63 Flowered
64 Brownish-orange horses
65 Prescient woman

DOWN
1 Finale of a sonnet
2 Chant
3 Accent
4 Draw
5 Hot diamonds
6 Lepidopterist's equipment
7 Wynn and McMahon
8 Hash house
9 Depend
10 "__ Got You Under My Skin"
11 Cribbage counter
12 Ancient
13 Composition writer
14 Loathed
20 Tentatively adds to the schedule
23 __ about time!
24 Coll. course
25 Famous cookie maker
26 Like an up-and-comer
27 Lyrical poem
28 Drinks counter
33 Cross the line, literally
34 Until this time
35 Augmenter
37 Painful
40 Put in stitches
41 The Loop loopers
43 Mama __!
44 Thanksgiving tuber
47 Oil-yielding seed
48 Hardens
49 Spirited horses
53 Bird's tool
56 Beatles hit, "And I Love __"
57 Learn like a monkey
58 Natl. TV network
59 Alternative to lager
60 Caviar
61 __ crying out loud!

Friday's Puzzle Solved

C	R	E	P	E	■	C	R	O	P	■	L	O	B	E
L	A	P	E	L	■	R	E	A	R	■	I	B	I	S
A	N	I	T	A	■	A	L	T	O	■	N	I	B	S
N	I	C	E	T	O	B	E	H	E	R	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	E	L	S	A	■	X	A	N	A	D	U	■
R	E	C	E	D	E	■	S	L	I	T	■	R	E	P
E	N	O	L	■	■	G	E	E	S	E	■	T	I	P
A	T	M	Y	A	G	O	■	I	T	S	N	I	C	E
D	R	E	■	D	O	R	M	S	■	■	B	E	E	R
E	E	R	■	A	L	M	A	■	G	U	A	R	D	S
R	E	S	E	N	D	■	L	E	A	N	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	T	O	B	E	A	N	Y	W	H	E	H	E
W	A	S	H	■	C	D	I	T	■	I	O	T	A	S
O	B	E	Y	■	R	I	S	E	■	S	A	N	D	S
N	A	I	L	■	G	E	E	R	■	E	R	A	S	E

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8/7/04

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

More dance-pop than classical

By Noelani Torre

(Conclusion)

"I DON'T think we ever thought of ourselves as a classical group," says Bond member Haylie Ecker, trying to explain their style.

"We are all trained musicians, so we know what classical music is. It was a challenge for us to create something new and different, taking inspiration from classical melodies.

"But, when we play live, we use electric violins and distortion pedals, we have a massive production, so in that way, we're much more pop."

BOND. Energy level is kept at a constant high.

Overkill

Thus, they're at their best when they're dealing with pop material, such as their cars n' guns-flavored first track, "Explosive." Their re-workings of classical melodies, however, don't always succeed. "Highly Strung," for example, is based on Aram Khachaturian's "Sabre Dance" (from the ballet, "Gayaneh"). They heap more electronica onto the already energetic piece, and the result is an absurd Road Runner-ish sequence that screams overkill from start to finish.

With Latin, African, and techno elements added to the mix, "Classified" is fun to listen and groove to at first. It never goes beyond that, however, and repeat listens only make it worse.

"Some records reveal more when they're on their fourth round in your player. With this album, however, all you'll find is that you have no idea what these musicians are trying to convey.

Good qualities

This sounds like outright condemnation, but the album does have its good qualities. For one, it's highly polished, which doesn't make it a pain to listen to. Also, the energy level is kept at a constant high all throughout.

Bond—which is made up of cellist Gay-Yee Westerhoff, violist Tania Davis, and violinists Eos Chater and Haylie Ecker—is no amateur group. Its members have a background in classical music. Too bad, though, that we don't hear more of their vaunted playing in this album.

'Ukay-ukay': Film archiving, Pinoy-style

By Clodualdo del Mundo Jr.

(Conclusion)

FROM the negatives found among the rescued films at LVN only "White Slavery" has been restored. It is doubtful, however, if the condition of the once-restorable film is still as good as it was over a decade ago.

Celebration

The year 2004 marks the 11th celebration of the founding of the archivists' group, Sofia. "Ukay-Ukay: Where's the Archive?," a festival of restored films, was the highlight of this celebration. The festival includes the following films: "Ano ang Kulay ng Mukha ng Diyos" (1986), "Banta ng Kahapon" (1977), "Biyaya ng Lupa" (1959), "Dalagang Ilocana" (1954), "Giliw Ko" (1939), "Jack and Jill" (1954), "Maalaala Mo Kaya?" (1954), "Malvarosa" (1958), "MN" (1954), "Pagdating sa Dulo" (1971), "Passionate Strangers" (1966), "Sandra Wong" (1955), "Seksing-Seksi" (1959) and "White Slavery" (1984).

Two films by National Artist Eddie Romero were featured in the festival: "Passionate Strangers" and "Banta ng Kahapon." Romero has been a staunch supporter of film archiving through the Cinema Values Reevaluation Program of the NCCA (National Commission for Culture and the Arts).

Dismal state

Unfortunately, despite the continued support of agencies like the NCCA, film archiving in the country is in a dismal state. We have to go beyond the *ukay-ukay* style of archiving if we hope to preserve even 10 percent of our cinematic heritage.

After over a decade of existence, the Society of Film Archivists is certain that there is no other way to preserve our films, but to have a National Film Archive.

The government (especially Congress), the industry (through the Film Academy of the Philippines and the Film Development Council of the Philippines), and the private sector (through Sofia and some philanthropists) have to get their act together.

Movie viewathon, anyone?

By Nestor U. Torre

HOW many full-length films can you see in one sitting? Last year, 11 movie buffs in New York went on a nonstop viewing binge for 66 hours and 30 minutes. Recently, however, determined film lovers in Singapore watched 36 movies in 72 hours, and claimed a new world record.

Will the new record hold? Those are fighting words—and, unless we're sorely mistaken, the challenge will soon be taken up by other groups of film buffs elsewhere.

New world record

Who knows, the new challengers could be right here, in the Philippines, where passionate film lovers abound. They watch three, four movies at a time as a matter of course, without even "training" for a moviegoing marathon to set a new world record.

We ourselves have set a personal record of six films in a row—*twice* in our moviegoing life.

The first time was when Johnny Litton of Mever Films invited Elvira Manahan and me to join him in an all-night viewing and eating marathon at his private screening room in his Dasmariñas Village home.

Being a film distributor, Johnny had to watch many movies each month before he released them in theaters. To keep from going out of his skull from boredom, he sometimes invited friends to view new releases with him.

To make the cinematic viewathon less of an ordeal for his friends, Johnny prepares a feast of gustatory goodies representing many different cuisines—a veritable United Nations of culinary delights.

The marathon viewing session began with our group in very high spirits, commenting volubly and wittily on the onscreen action. What a fun evening this was going to be, we thought, as we savored the first couple of movies, and the unending parade of yummies.

Exhaustion

Well, three movies later, not even the great food and company could get us to snap out of the feeling of numbness and exhaustion that had by then gotten us in its grip.

It wasn't that the movies we had seen weren't entertaining. The exhaustion came from the sheer number of hours we had spent film-watching thus far—almost five hours—as well as the additional hours we still had to put in before we could call it a night—or a morning, as the case may be.

By the fifth film, some of us were so pooped that we were lying down on the carpet, still with our bleary eyes fixed on the screen. By the sixth and last movie, we were propping our heavy eyelids open with figurative toothpicks.

Montage of scenes

When we finally staggered home, our body was humming from exhaustion, and our fitful dreams were a montage of scenes of the six movies we'd just seen—all jumbled up!

Our next six-film "viewathon"? It was when we were asked to judge a film competition, and the entries' producers submitted their movies at the very last minute, as usual, so we had to watch all of the entries in one fell swoop.

Anyway: Our point is that, with intensive training, some Pinoy film buffs could work up their filmic endurance to the point where they could conceivably challenge the three-day viewing record that Singapore has set.

Thirty-six movies plus one, anyone?

Dream Sequence features three powerful singers

By Andy Bais

AN acoustic group that's slowly making its presence felt in live entertainment calls itself Dream Sequence. Though just a year old in the business, it's now sought-after by bars and music lounges.

But, the group is not exclusively acoustic, says Narf Capistrano, Dream Sequence's keyboardist and manager. "We use a sequencer where drum, bass and guitar sounds are pre-sequenced with a live piano performance."

ACOUSTIC trio is composed of (from left) Aicelle Santos, Narf Capistrano and Arlene Salvado.

Best of both worlds

Putting up Dream Sequence was Narf's idea. He wanted to have "the best of both worlds." He still plays an active role in his family's shipping business.

"When the band scene became hectic, I had a difficult time coping with gigs. But, I didn't want to sacrifice my day job. So, I left my former band and formed a smaller group of three," he states.

With his handy sequencer to back up his new group, Narf recruited Great Divide's Arlene Salvado and fresh talent Aicelle Santos as vocalists.

"They are a vocal powerhouse," he beams. "Their voices complement each other, *at may kanya-kanya silang* strengths as singers."

Arlene has had stints with all-female groups. She recorded an album as a member of Tangerine, then released a solo album under Ivory Records. She's at home singing jazz, pop and R&B, and is partial to Julia Fordham, Faith Evans and Sarah McLachlan.

Finalist

For her part, Aicelle (a Claudine Barretto look-alike) was a "Star in a Million" finalist. Dream Sequence is her initiation into professional singing. Alicia Keys and Lauryn Hill are her favorite recording artists.

Narf adds, "We also play dance music, but we make it a point to infuse our own style—otherwise, we would just sound like a glorified karaoke band!"

Dream Sequence plays at The Bellevue Hotel in Alabang (Wednesdays); Monet at Holiday Inn Galleria Suites in Ortigas (Thursdays) and Stars Venue in Makati (Fridays).

Smooth grooves . . .

From page D1

an amalgam of influences: from folk songs to dance to improvisation-heavy jazz to Irish-Scottish lullaby reworked as pop.

"The Great Canyon" and "Kiko" are exuberant, percussion-laden melodies that bristle with finger-snapping energy, with flute and string arrangements that give them a Celtic flavor. In "Iihi Tabi Dachi," however, it's the eastern influence that seeps through the sweet, surreal ballad.

Great variety

There's great variety in the girls' collection. The ebulliently evocative sway of title track "Shining Energy" is reminiscent of Acoustic Alchemy. In "Loulan Girl," seemingly distant melodies are interspersed throughout the track after it starts off in a haunting monotone, then the music gradually slides into a hindu-african paean to beauty.

Familiar tunes are given a welcome reworking: Enya's vocals in "Only Time" are appropriately substituted for by strings and wind instruments; the Riverdance tune, "Reel Around the Sun," takes on a less campy sound, and the must-hear "Swan Lake" arrangement is hauntingly moody.

Call it "New Age," "lounge," "ambient" or whatever musical genre you wish to categorize it, but "Shining Energy's" music is just plain good music.

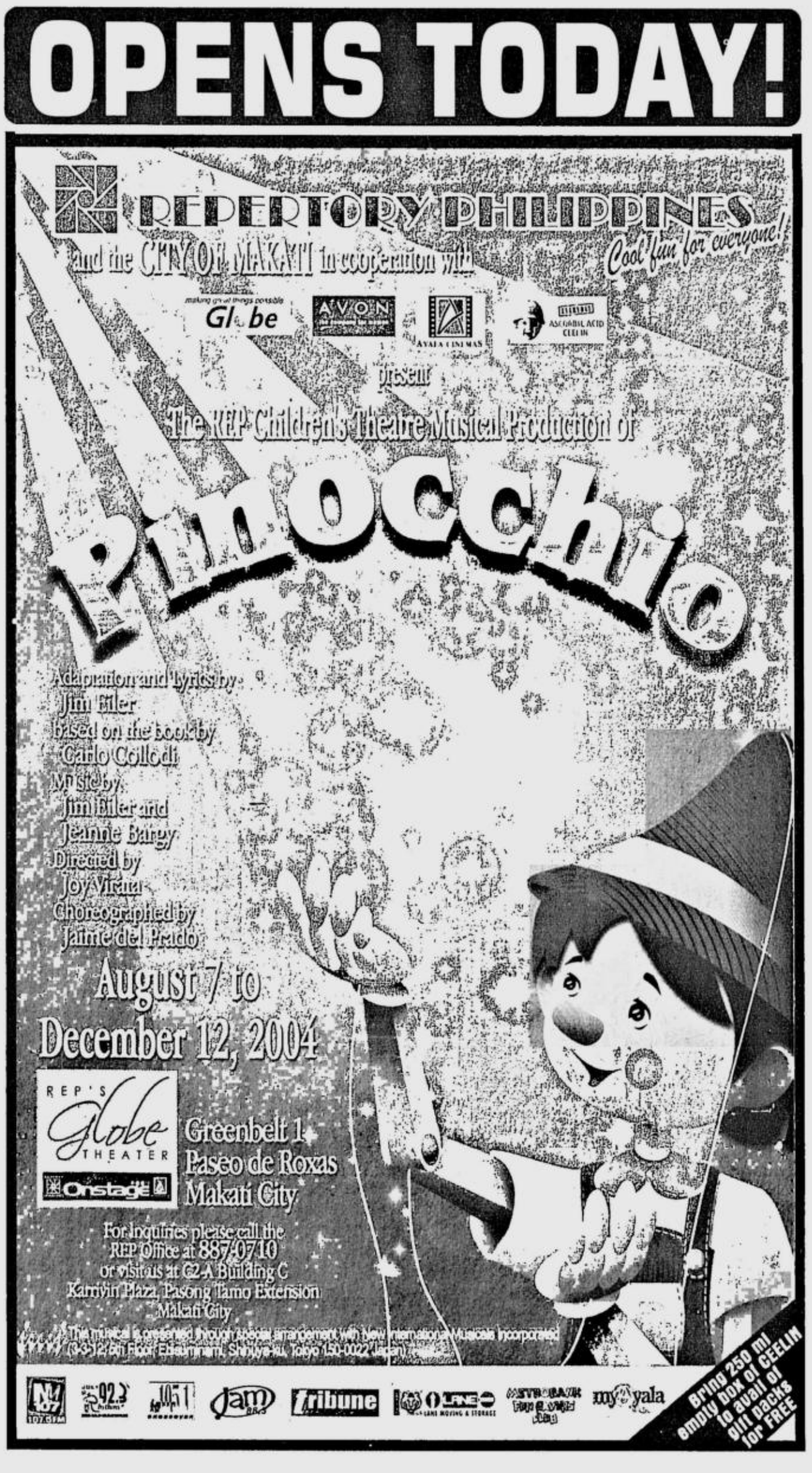
On the other hand, we truly enjoyed the smooth grooves included in Wave 89.1's compilation, "Dreamsounds," another melody-more-than-lyrics-driven collection of 15 tracks. These are not the familiar songs we hear *ad nauseum* on radio and in acoustic-themed albums.

Top tracks

Top tracks: Amiel Larrieux's "Make Me Whole" rises above hackneyed lyrics ("Your eyes are windows to heaven/ Your smile can heal my soul"); Musiq's "Don't Change" professes love beyond appearances and, well, adipose fat ("I'll still want you even if you gain weight"); Canadian crooner Glenn Lewis' silky voice ("Something to See") is reminiscent of a young Stevie Wonder.

The songs in the album contain sappy lyrics about romantic love, but their melodies are distinctly fresh. Lest we forget, an OPM track finds its way here: Inner Voices' (headed by Lew Soratorio Jr.) "All My Love."

In "Home," Brian McKnight's beautiful, velvety voice pleads: "Master, upon Your knees I pray/ I place my life in Your hand/ I gotta find my way back home"—an inspiring rendition from a talented artist who, despite continued success, still seeks Divine guidance in a world of material excess.



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NOW SHOWING

Comic verve on a tight leash

By Rito P. Asilo

WINSLET AND CARREY. Disarming performances.

"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"

D: Michel Gondry
C: Jim Carrey, Kate Winslet

SHY, self-effacing boy meets straight-talking, feisty girl. They fall head over heels in love, and commence a passionate but tumultuous relationship. One day, she decides to have him and all memories about their relationship "erased" from her mind.

Unable to stand the pain and loneliness, he decides to do the same. But, while his mind readily acquiesces, his heart resists. Is true love worth all the trouble and heartache?

Gondry breathes life into Charlie Kaufman's highly inventive, bizarre tale. He knits his intelligent, bittersweet love story with incredible scenarios made plausible and palatable by an ingeniously written script and disarming performances by Jim Carrey (who keeps his frenetic comic verve on a tight leash), Kate Winslet and Kirsten Dunst.

Like Gondry's extraordinary film (whose title is culled from a beautiful Alexander Pope verse), Life doesn't "write" pat conclusions for all of us. But, it occasionally hits us on the head to remind us that, really, some things are worth fighting for!

"Garfield: The Movie"

D: Pete Hewitt
S: Bill Murray, Breckin Meyer

Clueless, disco-dancing canine Odie steals the thunder from Jim Davis' computer-generated, lazy, lasagna-loving comic-strip feline, Garfield (voiced by Murray). When his master, Jon Arbuckle (Meyer), upon the prodding of beautiful veterinarian Liz (Jennifer Love Hewitt), decides to adopt the scruffy mongrel, Garfield's cat-centric fantasy world is suddenly threatened!

The jealous cat finds the solution to his dilemma when an unscrupulous infomercial TV show host kidnaps the crowd-pleasing Odie—then, Garfield's pangs of jealousy slowly turn into feelings of guilt. He rationalizes: "Nobody mistreats Odie but *me*!"

Murray tweaks the appropriately unsentimental voice work of Lorenzo Music on the animated TV series with his trademark humor and cynicism. However, his improvised tone in characterization somehow makes Garfield more sinister and scheming, and therefore, less appealing than he should be.

Meanwhile, Odie—with his underdog (pun intended) demeanor and amusing terpsichorean skills—wins his tussle with the fat cat by default!

"Beautiful Life"

D: Gil Portes
S: Gloria Romero, Dina Bonnevie

GIL Portes' well-intentioned film, "Beautiful Life," explores the dynamics of grief and acceptance in Regal's star-studded three-hanky melodrama. When a bomb goes off at a local airport, the lives of many people are changed forever, as they struggle to understand the effects of violence, and cope with the loss of their loved ones.

Magda (Gloria Romero) refuses to accept the death of her husband, whom she loses on their 50th wedding anniversary; she imagines him dancing, eating and flirting with her. Carmen (Dina Bonnevie) loses her son, and finds it hard to accept his fiancee and her former husband (Ricky Davao) back in her life.

Dolor's (Angel Aquino) departed husband (Raymond Bagatsing) doesn't just leave her his restaurant business—he leaves her a mistress (Aubrey Miles), a sick son, and a best friend (Reggie Curley) who's secretly in love with him! The suicide bomber's mom, Benita (Amy Austria), has to deal not only with her son's death, but also with guilt and public indignation.

Glossy and beautifully shot (check out a scene where Austria walks on a foot bridge), it also boasts of a memorable theme song (Noel Cabangon's "Kay Ganda ng Buhay") and above-par production values.

But, the movie is trite, sappy, and constantly resorts to emotional blackmail. It is replete with "engineered" situations that test viewers' patience—which is a pity, because Portes is otherwise one of our more reliable directors.

Benita attends a support group for the families of her son's victims, and wonders why she's given the cold shoulder and gets a tongue-lashing from Carmen; soldiers barge into Benita's hut to look for her terrorist son, Abel, and then, as they leave, they tell her that he's dead. Huh? Apparently, the film's scriptwriters didn't notice those lapses.

Despite the promising premise, the movie fails to probe deeper into its characters' grief. The actors graze through their roles with oodles of mush and lachrymal exercises. And, while this type of grieving is not uncommon, the characters in the film "dispense" all too similar reactions. (Check out Charlotte Rampling's subdued performance as a grieving widow in Francois Ozon's "Under the Sand.")

Actors should be reminded that crying on cue is not the be all and end all of a good performance. They can't simply wing things on the misguided mantra, "If all else fails, cry..." When Magda reacts to a tearjerker on TV, she says, "*Ano ba 'yan, puro iyakan!*" Our thoughts exactly.

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DRILON. Broadcaster and mother.

Ces Drilon boosts production of inspiring television programs for young viewers

By Nestor U. Torre

WE recently had the pleasure of sharing the stage with acclaimed TV journalist and program host Ces Drilon, at a forum on helping youths make their voices heard in the media, at the PICC.

We were impressed with Ces' commitment and sense of responsibility, and the young people and NGO leaders in the audience learned a lot from her insights.

Highlights

To further extend and expand the reach of Ces' thoughts, we're paraphrasing the highlights of her talk, which she originally delivered in Filipino:

"I'm here as a media person—but I'm also a mother. The future of our young people is important to me because I have four sons, and they will be among the youths who will benefit from the programs that will be formulated in this seminar.

Problems

"I admit, media is part of the many problems our country is facing today. But, media is also part of the solution, and this is what I want to focus on:

"First, how do we give our young people a voice, and how can media be a bridge, so that their voice will be heard by those in power?

"Before this can happen, we need a responsible media, which will verify the truth and accuracy of its reports.

"Media has responsibilities and ethics, like not showing the faces of children who are victims of violence.

"Often, media is sought out for help by desperate people who have lost all hope. This is in addition to our first duty, which is to simply report the news.

"This is because many here seem to think that people in media are all-powerful. That can be a scary thought. It has also prompted some of us to enter politics, because of the excessive trust of the public in our capabilities.

Politics

"In my view, we don't need to go into politics to help solve the problems of the country. For instance, the ABS-CBN Foundation and its shows do a lot for young viewers.

"In the field of news, I believe that we can give the youth a louder voice if we provide more hours to sharing stories that provide inspiration, stories of triumph in the face of adversities.

"On our show, 'Pipol,' we recently did a feature on three young friends who devoted their free time, not to gimmicks, but to robotics!

Good news

"Many people say that it isn't the media's job to look for good news, or to help people. Our work, they insist, is simply to report what's happening, good or bad.

"But, I believe otherwise: Our country is in crisis. The 'business as usual' attitude is no longer sufficient. We need to look for reports that inspire, which usually don't come out in the media, which is often focused on bad news. As a result, many of us lose heart.

"We have to elevate our perception of ourselves, our possibilities and our prospects, so that our country will have hope." *(To be concluded)*

There's more to Tuesday Vargas than novelty

By Noelani Torre

THE IDEA of combining music and comedy is not new, particularly in this country, where there is a surfeit of singers and comedians.

Novelty songs are the usual result of this merging, and these have been very ubiquitous lately.

Everybody is coming up with a novelty CD, and it's not surprising why, as people seem to be gulping down this sort of fare with an appetite that is nothing short of phenomenal.

Comic effect

The most famous examples of novelty songs, however—the Sex Bomb Girls' "Spaghetti Song" and Bayani Agbayani's "Otso-Otso"—don't feature good singing, and their comic effect springs from nonsense lyrics and silly/sexy dance moves rather than actual wit.

This is where Tuesday Vargas' foray into novelty music-making differs. The comedienne can sing, for one, and her lyrics make sense. In fact, she does not want her album to be labeled as novelty.

Musicality

"In terms of musicality," she explained at a press conference, "*pinag-isipan ang mga kanta*. Unlike most novelty songs that just have verses and choruses, *yung iba dito, may* bridge *pa*. We were very particular about musical structure."

Nevertheless, her songs do have a strong novelty slant, but they're several degrees higher in quality. Aside from the fact that Tuesday is a singer and comedienne, the songs sound like they've had some thought put into them.

They're catchy, as all novelty songs must be, but the tunes are original, and the lyrics convey more than hey-let's-see-how-inane-we-can-get sentiments.

The album's carrier single, title track "Babae Po Ako," has been getting a lot of airplay lately. Here, the comedienne emphatically puts to rest speculations concerning her gender. "*Hindi ako bakla-kla-kla-kla-kla-kla,*" she sings in the song's refrain. (Listeners, be warned: this is exasperatingly catchy, and can cause much mortification when sung at inappropriate times and places.)

Controversy

Apparently, the song has given rise to some controversy, what with its seemingly anti-gay stand.

A listen to the lyrics clears this up, however. Tuesday is only saying "*babae po ako*," after all. The joke, as she herself explained, is actually on her.

VARGAS. Her songs' lyrics make sense.

The song that ought to get that sort of scrutiny is "Kuya Wag Po." It's only about a girl rejecting the tiresome attentions of an older man—"*Wag mo akong ligawan . . . Nene pa ko, ikaw ay tatang,*"—but, the "*Kuya, wag po*" refrain is over-emphasized. It's not a good joke in the first place, what with its overtones of rape and sexual harassment, and repetition only draws attention to its tastelessness.

The rest of the songs in the rather brief listing are harmless fluff, ranging from the ballad-ish "Diak Maawatan" and "Naman" to the upbeat "Talaga Lang Ha," "Giling-Giling" and "Habulin Nyo Ako."

Versions

There are only seven songs here, but the inclusion of minus-one versions of "Babae Po Ako," "Kuya Wag Po" and "Naman" fattens up the playlist. It would still be pretty thin if this weren't a novelty album, but it's fine as it is. One can only have so much novelty, after all.

What really sets this album apart is Tuesday's singing. Her voice reminds us of Sampaguita's, and a look at Vargas' background will show us that she has more in common with the rock singer than we'd have thought.

Lead vocalist

Tuesday used to be the lead vocalist of well-known ska band Put3ska. This explains the ease and confidence in her singing, as well as its occasional, intriguingly raspy texture. She's not looking to establish herself as a solo artist, though.

"Babae Po Ako" is only supposed to remind us that the comedienne has more than one talent. It succeeds in convincing us of this, and as light entertainment, it isn't bad, either. You could do worse.

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM AUG. 7 - AUG. 13

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	6:30 Star in A Million 7:30 TV Patrol 8:00 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 9:00 Home Along da Airport 10:00 Victim 11:00 Kontrobersyal 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 National Geographic 7:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 8:00 Search for the 1st Tanduay Billiards Player	6:00 Asian 9 Ball 7:00 Viva Box Office *Alabang Girls* 9:00 Sing-Galing 10:00 Maverick and Ariel 10:00 On-Air 11:00 ABC Treats *Equinox*	5:30 Pinoy Pop Superstar 6:30 Biloy's Funniest Videos 7:30 Extra Challenge 8:15 Imbestigador 9:30 Idol Ko Si Kap 11:10 Kakabakaba Adventures	6:00 Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo 7:00 7 Days 8:00 John Doe 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse 11:00 PGMA	6:00 Visa &Job Info Show 7:00 Bitag 8:00 Legacy of Hero 9:00 World Women's Grand Prix 2004 11:00 Iyo ang Katarungan	6:00 Sports TV 6:30 Game Plan 7:00 7th Heaven 7:45 Boston Public 8:45 America's Next Top Model 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:15 Reel Deel	6:00 Agila Reports 6:30 Screen Savers 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Car Guys 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
	5:30 Rated K-Handa Ka Na Ba? 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Tanging Ina 9:30 Sunday Family Cinema 11:30 The Weekend News	6:00 15th Mitsubishi Lancer Int'l Juniors Tennis Championships 9:00 Go For Gold 11:00 Unlimited Diving	5:00 Best of PBA Games 7:00 Viva Cine Idols *Boy Buluran* 9:00 Fear Factor 10:00 Single 10:30 ABC Onstage *Enrique Iglesias*	6:00 Partners Mel & Jay 7:30 Ki The P1 Million Videoke Challenge 9:00 Daddy Di Do Du 10:00 Sunday Night Box Office	6:00 Smack Down Wrestling 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 May Puso ang Batas 9:00 Sunday's Big Event 11:00 URRC TV	6:00 Home Shopping Network 7:00 Japan Video Topic 8:00 D.E.N.R. 9:00 In This Corner 10:00 MTV Filler 10:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Ngiting 7:00 The Amazing Race 8:00 Two & a Half Men 8:30 Just Shoot Me 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 F 10:15 Digital Tour 10:45 The Bachelor 11:30 Scariest Places on Earth	6:00 Captured 6:30 Fresh Gear 7:00 Convergence 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 New Yankee Workshop 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Ang Iglesia ni Cristo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Victim Extreme 7:45 Marina 8:15 Basta't Kasama Kita 8:45 Hiram 9:15 It Might Be You 9:45 OK Fine! Whatever 11:00 Insider 11:30 The Correspondents	6:00 Concert at the Park 7:00 Search for the 1st Tanduay Billiards Player 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 Dial M	5:30 Sentro 6:30 The Outsiders 7:00 Gagsters 7:30 Friends 8:00 The Apprentice 9:00 Crouching Tiger 9:30 Diretsahan 10:00 Big News 10:30 Fireworks 11:00 By Request	6:00 24 Oras 7:00 Extra Challenge 7:45 Mulawin 8:15 Te Amo 8:45 Marinara 9:15 30 Days 9:45 Lapot Ka, Isusumbong Kita 11:15 Saksi 11:45 I-Witness	6:00 Invader Zim 6:30 Entertainment Tonight 7:00 Just for Laffs 8:00 Jag 9:00 The Agency 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sex & the City 11:00 Atelier	6:00 Legacy of Hero 7:00 WWE Smackdown 8:00 Liwanag ng Mundo 9:00 Japan Video Topic 10:30 IBC News Tonite 11:00 Linawin Natin	6:00 Batman Animated 6:30 Samurai Deeper Kyo 7:00 Wazzup, Wazzup 7:30 World's Craziest Videos 8:00 Buffy 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Travel Time	6:00 Net 25 Report 6:30 World Report Filipino Edition 7:00 Openline 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Convergence 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
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Romance and drama on Hallmark

THIS month, the Hallmark Channel's "Movie Premieres" at 9 p.m. presents a choice selection of movies brimming with romance and drama:

Aug. 7, "Reversible Errors," starring William H. Macy and Tom Selleck as a lawyer and detective, respectively, who find themselves on competing sides in a sensational court case. In the end, the lawyer questions not only his professional choices, but also his personal convictions.

Aug. 12, "Dog-Gone Love," a new take on the boy-meets-girl story, as even their dogs fall in love! With Alexander Chaplin and Lindsay Sloane.

Aug. 15 "Tattoo, A Love Story" is about a conservative teacher who inexplicably falls for a Harley-riding skin artist. The schoolmarm's world spins out of control as she is forced to choose between her bland fiancé and the new man in her life.

Aug. 19, "Grownups," about two longtime buddies who are bored with their lives and decide to liven things up by playing the dangerous game of wife-swapping. Will their friendship and marriages survive this ultimate trial?

Aug. 26, "Happy Hour." In the film, a burnt-out writer experiences his second glory with a feisty lady who matches him "drink for drink, quip for quip." With Caroleen Feeney, Eric Stoltz and Anthony LaPaglia.

Movies on TV

On HBO, Aug. 7 at 7:30 a.m., "Lone Star State of Mind." Aug. 8 at 7:50 a.m., "Quigley." Aug. 9 at 12:30 p.m., "Catch Me If You Can." Aug. 10 at 10 p.m., "Sex and the City" marathon special, until 1:55 a.m. Aug. 11 at 2:15 p.m., "Plenty." Aug. 12 at 2:10 p.m., "Jimmy Hollywood." Aug. 13 at 12:45 p.m., "8 Mile."

MONTAGE

On Cinemax, Aug. 7 at 2 p.m., "And the Band Played On." Aug. 8 at 9:30 a.m., "Vanilla Sky." Aug. 9 at 3:15 p.m., "Hitler & I: Reflections on Evil." Aug. 10 at 9:15 a.m., "Marjorie Morningstar." Aug. 11 at 11:15 a.m., "Altered States." Aug. 12 at 12:30 p.m., "The Godfather." Aug. 13 at 9 p.m., "Clockers."

Cinema on 'Catwoman'

Cinema (the CBCP's Catholic Initiative for Enlightened Movie Appreciation) rates "Catwoman" generally acceptable on point of ethical assessment, and average on technical assessment. Excerpts of evaluation:

Halle Berry puts up a great show as Catwoman, and the music succeeds in heightening parts of the film. But, there are some inconsistencies. And the plot is thin—Catwoman doesn't really have anybody as powerful as she is to contend with. Still, the movie's special effects are superb.

The film attempts to ridicule vain efforts of trying to achieve eternal youthfulness. The metallic skin is a symbol of this vanity. Worse, what is corrupted outside is also corrupted inside.

Also, there is something negative in the way freedom is expressed. This unbridled, untamed, lustful sense of freedom unencumbered by laws is what "Catwoman" is all about. Viewers should also take care about elements like reincarnation and premarital sex in the movie.

TOM Selleck, Monica Potter and William H. Macy topbill "Reversible Errors."

The business of beauty

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

AS a teenager in her hometown in Santa Barbara, Pangasinan, Tina De Vera dreamed of becoming a beautician. She went to a vocational school, then moved to Manila. Grace Lagman was her mentor.

Soon after, Tina was chosen by Clairol to attend a seminar in New York for hair coloring. By then, she was already managing a thriving beauty parlor. To hone her craft further, she attended seminars facilitated by Toni & Guy in London and Vidal Sassoon in New York.

Latest trends

Occasionally, she would visit her sister in Germany for updates on latest trends and techniques in the industry.

Presently, her salon boasts of eight beauticians. It offers services such as rebonding, facial massage, haircut, coloring and styling, manicure and pedicure make-up and permanent eyebrow tattooing.

Her daughter Tina Girl is a computer management graduate, but she gave up working as an information technology expert to follow in her mother's footsteps.

Tina's shop is at 5925 Alger st., Makati City (near Grilla). Call 895-7584.

E-mail author at mandynavasero@photopro.com.ph

DE VERA. Dream come true.

Cleansing of the mind

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

CONTINUATION of PDI Editor in Chief Letty Jimenez Magsanoc's introduction to our "Lotus Pond" book:

"As in most projects that a daily paper undertakes, the deadline is yesterday.

"In 1992, Saturday Special was being rushed. As I conceptualized it, the section would be a guide to weekend living. (It has since evolved into an all-out entertainment section.)

"I had everything down pat. Still, I felt the section lacked a certain something. And I didn't quite know what—until Baby started talking to me about vegetarianism, yoga, alternative medicine, meditation, chanting the names of God, the search, the yearning for the Absolute Truth.

"What struck me as awesome was not the ideas she was espousing, but she herself. This was not the Baby I knew! The Baby of old was stuck to solid stuff and tinseled fluff galore. You name it, she had it; bad habits, too.

Intact

"Yet, as I listened to her, I realized that so much of the Baby of old was intact: In-your-face, wide-open mind and heart, fun, even wacky, naughty, creative, down-to-earth.

"Meaning, that even as she had her eyes fixed in the heavens as an ardent seeker of wisdom and truth, her feet were rooted on the ground. She remained 'lower than the grass.'

"Baby was all lightness of being. She talked about the sublime as a down-to-earth, matter-of-fact reality. She was spiritual yet practical. And she was entertaining, too.

"It quickly occurred to me that she had to be part of Saturday Special. She had to share her search.

"That is how 'Lotus Pond' came to be. This book is a selection of her columns of the past 12 years. None of it is above the clouds. She tackles the daily concerns of the human condition, from the responsibility of media to eating too much (healthy recipes included), to the kind of leaders we need for population control (a no-no!).

Faithful follower

"This book shows that Baby has been a faithful follower of the instructions of her acknowledged spiritual master, Jagad Guru Siddhaswarupananda Paramahamsa, 'to apply lessons according to any particular situation.'

"Not to worry that the handbook does not have the imprimatur of your religion. Baby says, 'The different religious faiths are meant to help us learn the methods with which to love God.' Amen."

And my response to my editor in chief is: Thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to share and be of service to others!

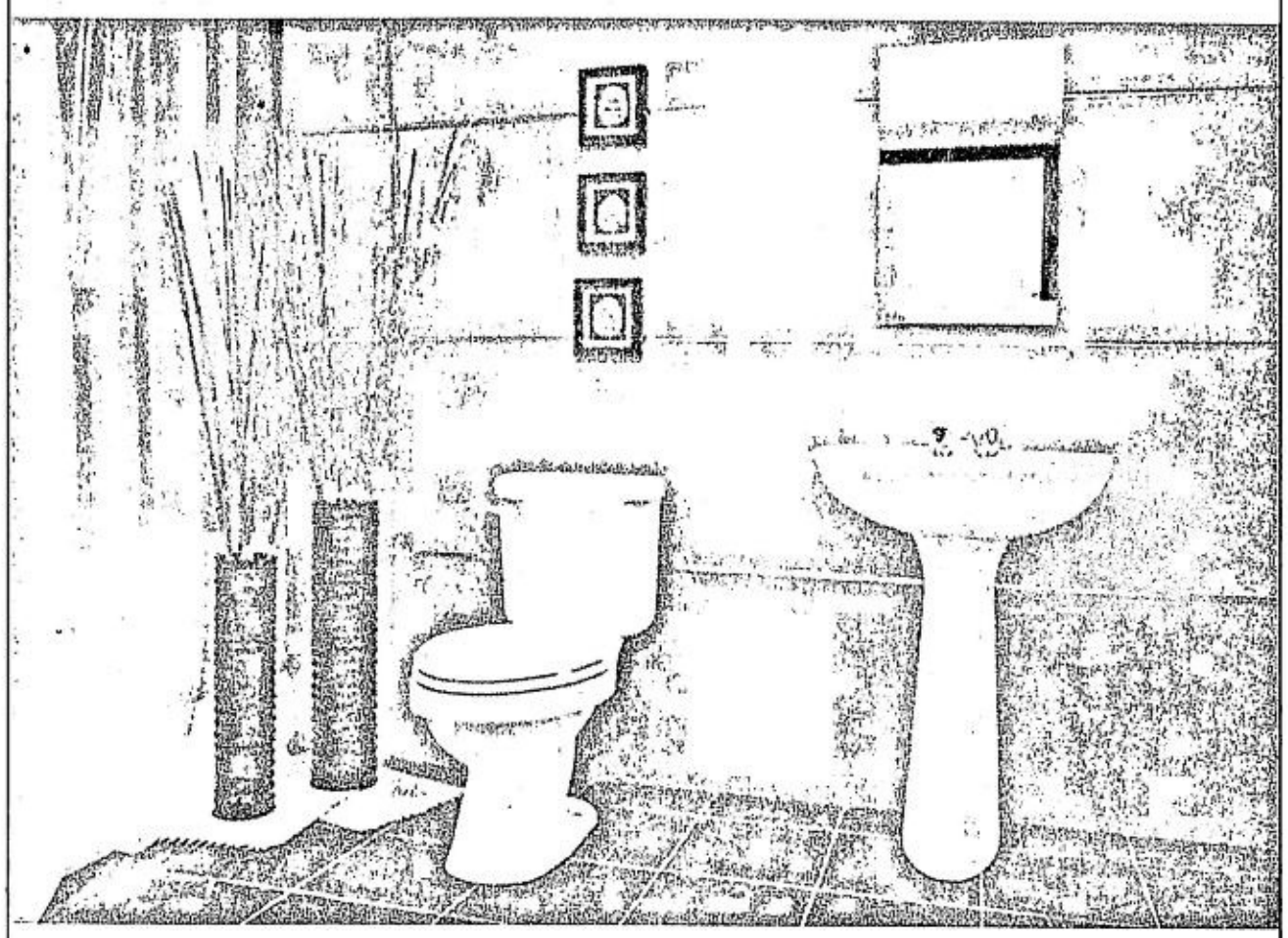
For those asking for copies, you can find them at Powerbooks branches in Greenbelt, Megamall or Alabang. Please ask friends or relatives in Manila to get them for you.

Happy reading!

Email lotuspond108@inquirer.com.ph

STYLE AND PERFORMANCE WITHIN REACH

Eunice



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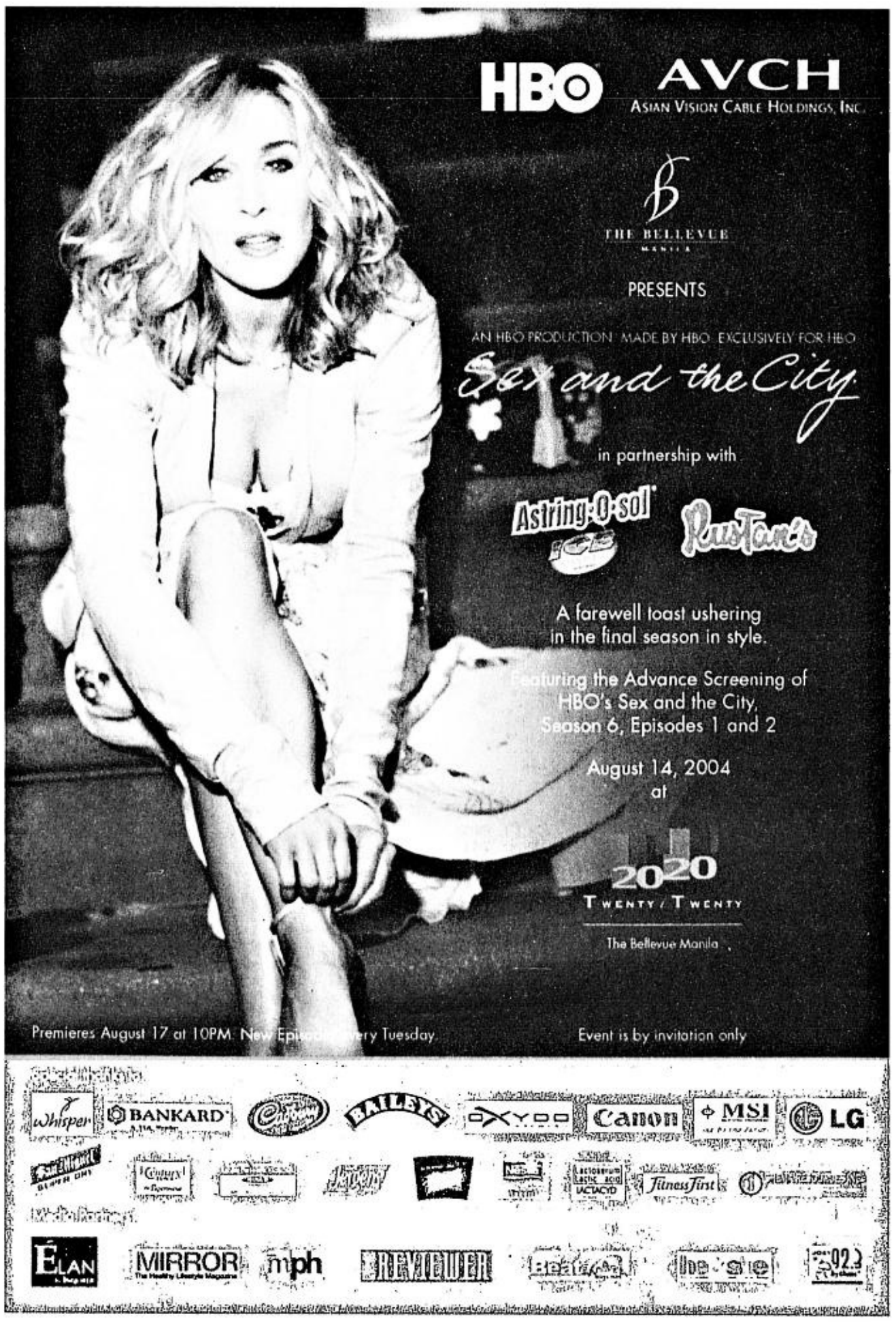

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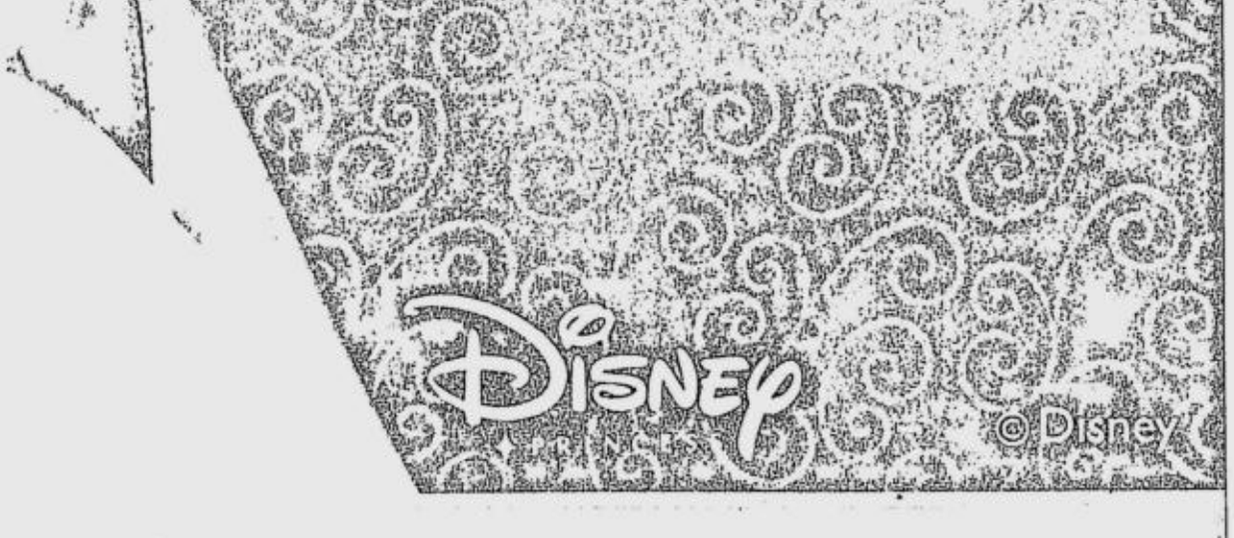


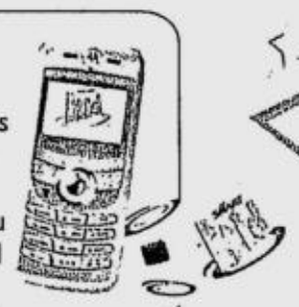
SMART Kid gives you a chance to win any of 100 Disney Princess magical Birthday Party Packages at McDonald's!

With SMART Kid, you can get a chance to celebrate your birthday with your favorite Disney Princess characters at McDonald's for **FREE!** Join the raffle by getting a SMART KID PHONE KIT or SIM PACK, at SMART Wireless Centers or at the SMART Kid Mall Blitz.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1457 Series of 2004.

Plus any of 50 SMART Kid Phone Kits!

Also get a chance to win any of 50 SMART Kid Motorola C375 phone kits to be given away! To qualify, just sign up for a McDonald's Birthday Party at selected McDonald's stores nationwide and make a downpayment of Php500.00. Every booked birthday party gives you one raffle coupon. You can also choose from a variety of party themes - Disney Princess, Ronald and the Gang, or Winnie the Pooh.



Per DTI-NCR Permit No 1457 Series of 2004

To get Disney Princess downloads, just type PRINCESS and send to 238

SMART Kid Mall Blitz Schedules:

Fridays to Sundays starting August 6 - 29 at the following malls:

- Alabang Town Center
- Power Plant Mall, Rockwell
- The Podium
- Shangri-la Mall

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SATURDAY special

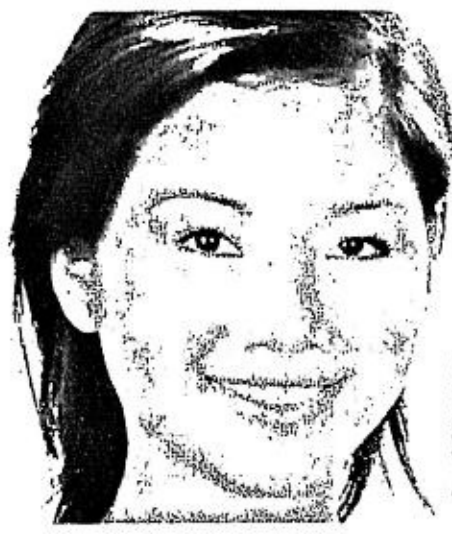
Text Feedback: inquirer sat name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Also-rans can be winners, too

By Nestor U. Torre

EVERYBODY loves a winner, but rejects a loser—or used to. Time was when, if you won a competition, you smelled like a rose, but if you lost the next contest, you instantly became a stinker. —Talk about fair-weather adulation!

Happily, people have grown and wised up since then, so we're now seeing some also-rans becoming even more successful than the talents who beat them.



REGIS. Could become this generation's version of Nora Aunor.

Special performances

In the US, 2003 "American Idol" winner Ruben Studdard's success has been eclipsed by second-placer Clay Aiken, who now pulls about double what Studdard gets paid for special performances.

Locally, Aiza Seguerra didn't top the Little Miss Philippines tilt she competed in as a three-year-old prodigy, but she went on to become a child superstar in the tradition of Tessie Agana and Niño Muhlach.

As for the winner of the Little Miss Philippines tilt that Aiza lost, who remembers her now?

Last year, petite belter Sheryn Regis was many viewers' bet to top the "Star in A Million" singing tilt on TV, but she failed to clinch the winner's crown.

She was visibly disappointed, but we urged her not to lose heart because we felt that her unique combination of petite frame and powerful singing voice would enable her to stand out in the highly competitive performing scene.

Making waves

Well, it looks like Sheryn *is* making waves in show biz. She guests frequently on television, and is featured in concerts not just here, but also for Filipino communities overseas.

In addition, she's just launched her debut album, and it's a safe bet that it will click with listeners. If she plays her cards right, Sheryn could even become this generation's version of Nora Aunor, another wee singer with a big, expressive voice, who created the "Superstar" title in local entertainment.

More recently, Hero Angeles won the Star Circle Quest talent search, but his runner-up, Sandara Park, is doing even better than he is these days. She's the only Quester with a show of her own ("Sandara's Romance"), has also cut her first album, and was the subject last month of a special program shot in her native Korea, where four young male comers competed for her favor.

Singular success

If that doesn't spell singular success, we don't know what does.

So, other people who can't quite make it to the top on their first attempt shouldn't lose heart! Sometimes, contest jurors are dead wrong, and the collective vote of the viewing public still has the last and best word on what truly spells success in show business.

SEGUERRA. From three-year-old prodigy to child superstar.

AIKEN. Now earns about double what Ruben Studdard gets.

PARK. Only Quester with a TV show of her own.

Ateneo College Entrance Test
Weekend Review only (32 Hours)
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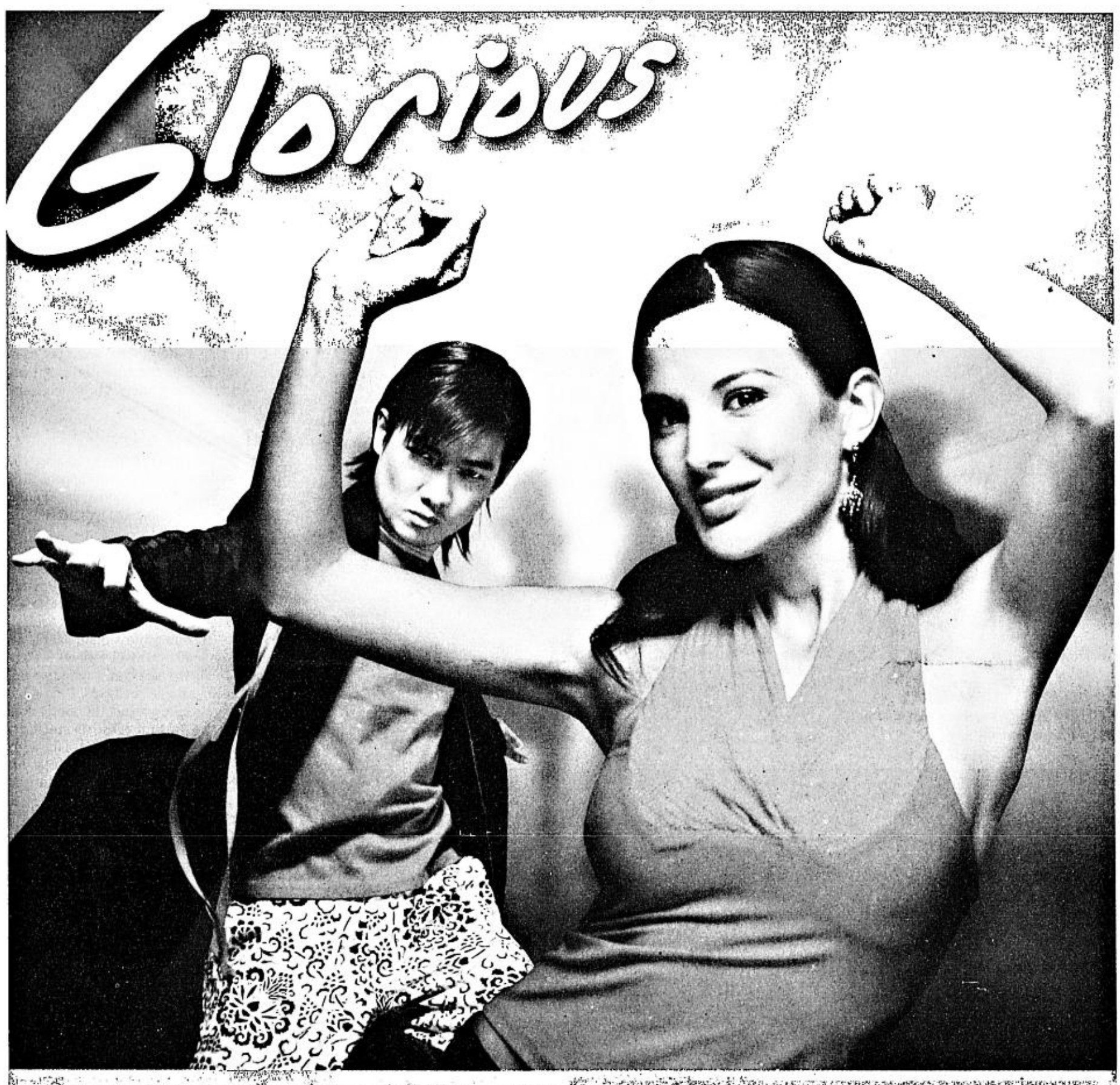

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Teen queens make school cool

LOS ANGELES—Mean girls, teen girls, clean girls—a new gaggle of girls are, like, totally "in" these days, relegating old favorites Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera to "so yesterday" status in the lucrative US tween market.

On movie screens, music, radio and magazine covers, girls on the cusp of womanhood have become hot celebrities, and thus, cool role models for the seven- to 13-year-old set.

DUFF. Queen bee among show biz's new breed of adolescent girls.

Pop princess

While former pop princesses Britney and Christina have established themselves as adult sex kittens, actresses Hilary Duff, Lindsay Lohan, Alexa Vega, Raven, Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen and Anne Hathaway seem happy to navigate the minefield of growing up.

Already fabulously rich and impossibly pretty, these teenage drama queens have lives with a fairy-tale quality that belies the everyday angst of the middle school cliques and high school proms endured by their various screen characters and their loyal fan base.

At 16, Duff is queen bee among this new breed of teen girls. Cute, clean and savvy, she became a household name among tweens in 2001 as a klutzy middle-schooler in the Disney Channel TV series, "Lizzie McGuire," before bringing the character to the big screen in "The Lizzie McGuire Story." Her first album, "Metamorphosis," containing the breezy anthems, "Why Not" and "So Yesterday," went triple platinum. A second album comes out next month.

Duff's movie, "A Cinderella Story," is the latest in a series of girl movies that have turned school cool at the box office.

LOHAN. Youngest person to host an MTV Movie Award show.

The movie sees the refreshingly bubbly actress battling a wicked stepmother, as well as the vicious but "popular" high-school crowd in an updated version of the classic tale.

Role model

Duff says it is flattering rather than scary to be a role model for millions of younger girls.

"If they have something they want to accomplish, and they look at me and see I'm trying to fulfill my goals, that is really cool," she told Reuters.

"I don't feel pressure, like I can't dress like this because of them. I don't wear super-revealing outfits, and I don't think that is necessary," she said.

Ironically, Duff hasn't been to school since starting work on "Lizzie McGuire," where she was taught one on one by a tutor. Not that she's losing any sleep over it.

"I've been to school dances, but it wasn't fun because I didn't know many people there.

Good life

"I lead a good life. I don't think I miss it. I wouldn't trade my life for anything. I'm happy. I get stuff that normal kids don't get, and they get stuff that I don't get," she said.

Lindsay Lohan rivals Duff as one of Hollywood's most sought-after young stars, after following up last year's "Freaky Friday" success with "Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen" and the high-school clique comedy, "Mean Girls."

Lohan, who turned 18 in July, appears to have managed an easier transition from child star than twins Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen. The recent 18th birthday of the wide-eyed celebrity twins was marred by the flop of their coy first feature film, "New York Minute," and Mary-Kate's admission to a clinic for anorexia treatment.

In June, at 17, Lohan became the youngest person to host an MTV Movie Award show, won the MTV movie award for breakthrough female performance, and has just released her first single, "I Decide," with an album to follow.

Alexa Vega, 15, has graduated from the "Spy Kids" movie series to star as a mixed-up middle schooler in the girl comedy, "Sleepover."

Old ladies

Raven, 18, is wowing Disney Channel fans with her own school-based TV series, "That's So Raven." Comparative old ladies Mandy Moore, 20, and Anne Hathaway, 21, star as troubled teens this year in "Chasing Liberty" and "Saved," and in "Ella Enchanted" and "The Princess Diaries 2," respectively.

Duff, who had a highly publicized spat with Lohan after both girls briefly dated singer Aaron Carter, finds the competition more awesome than awful.

"There is plenty of room for everyone. Everybody is so talented, and I feel like I'm in great company," she said. *Reuters*

MONTELIBANO AND INOCENCIO. From theater to television.

Look at them now!

By Behn Cervantes

MARY Vargas was a "droppable" name on the UP campus because she was goodlooking, articulate, poised, shapely, and carried herself with confidence. She was pedigreed, she drove her own car—obviously, she was a girl who had everything!

Adaptation

On her last year in mass communication, she asked me to appear in her final television project, which was an adaptation of "Anna Kleiber." She sought the help of aunt Lupita Aquino Kashiwahara. Soon after, I staged Ugo Betti's "The Queen and the Rebels" and cast her in the demanding role of the harlot mistaken for a queen by vengeful rebels.

I was immediately impressed with her focus, sense of professionalism and total commitment. She was the star, but her exemplary conduct showed the rest how to prepare for a role. In fact, she possessed all the fine traits I wanted in an actor. I had no doubt she had a future in theater.

Instead, she entered the competitive arena of television, and was soon directing shows for top studios. She no longer wanted to be called Mary—she was now to be called Maria. She changed her name further when she got married, and became Maria V. Montelibano.

Popular appeal

Her projects were critically praised for meshing substance with popular appeal. "Miscellaneous," with Maan Hontiveros, Tina Revilla and Yogi Dominquez, required homework, and that she did.

Even then, she had a keen awareness of what the audience wanted and needed, and she pragmatically met those demands in a tasteful and interesting manner.

Generally known as *areglada* because she is a fastidious professional, Maria demands that logistics are in place for any project. Then, she directed a popular talk show hosted by Jullie Yap Daza.

Her longest stint was as the meticulous and innovative director of the second life of "Two for the Road." The popular late-night show was hosted by the wonderfully unpredictable Elvira Manahan with the director of the first "Two For The Road," NUT, as her witty co-host.

By this time, Maria and I had become friends. So, we would exchange UP anecdotes and political updates. We worked together on several anti-Martial Law shows.

Upon my invitation, she became a founding member of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines, with Lino Brocka, Pete Lacaba and other anti-censorship advocates.

In social functions, she consistently introduces me as her mentor. Really, she does me proud!

In 1978, I staged Bonifacio Ilagan's "Sigaw Ng Bayan" immediately after my release from detention in Bicutan. I was incarcerated after I mounted "Pagsambang Bayan" (also by Ilagan), a fearless indictment of Martial Law that demanded a more pro-*masa* church. The previous title of "Sigaw ng Bayan" was "Katipunan," but the temper of the times prodded me to change it because I found the original too staid.

Dangerous times

Since those were dangerous times, I had made it a practice to ask popular movie stars to appear in UP Repertory Company productions, both as shield and attraction.

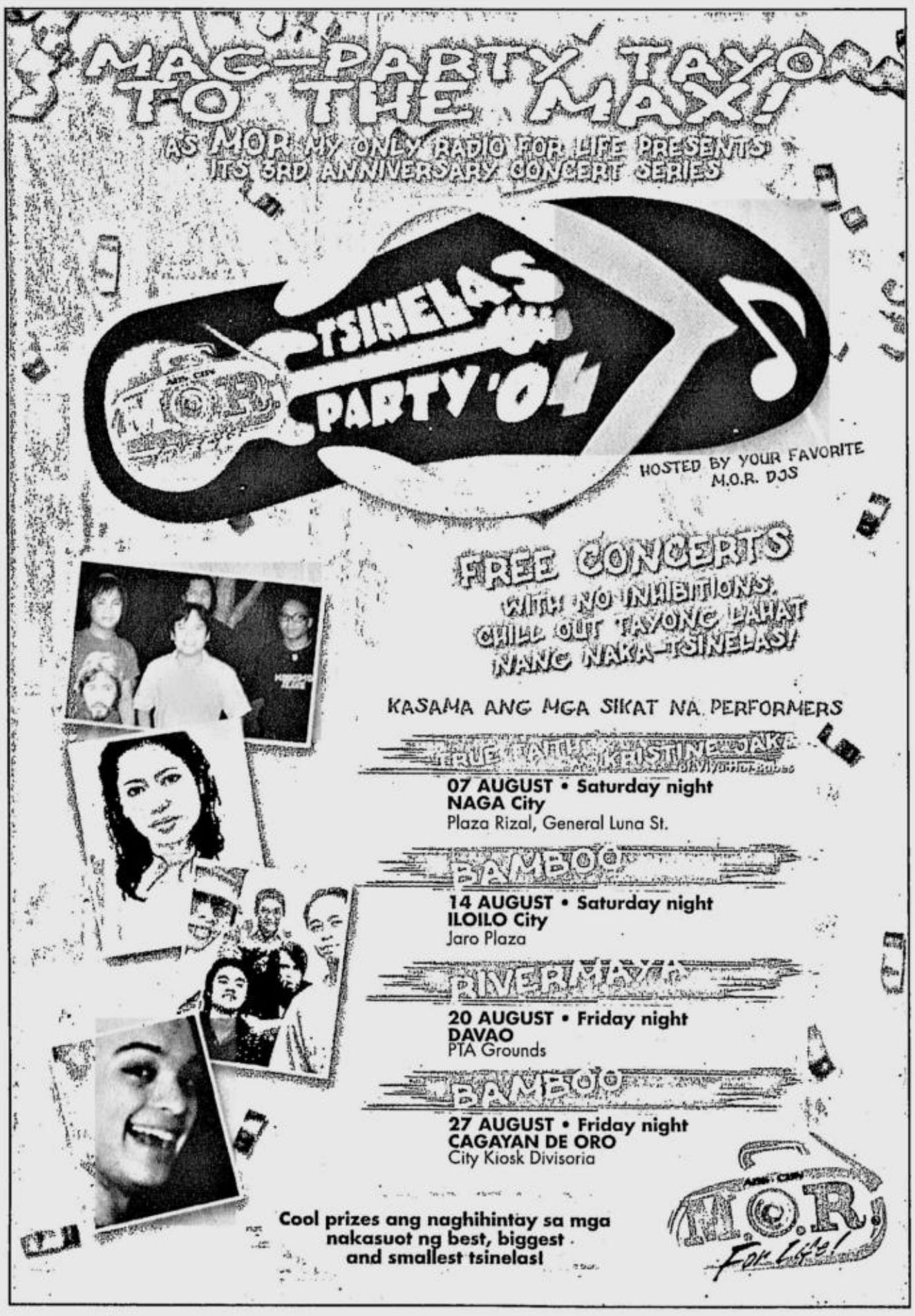
I asked Gloria Diaz to reprise the role of Gregoria de Jesus (she had also played Bonifacio's young wife in Domingo Landicho's "Dapithapon."). A large number of students auditioned. I cast them all because I wanted as many people as possible to heed the play's call to arms. Of course, they would have to stomach my demands and temper, too. *Matira ang matibay*!

I always cast a student to alternate in the same role. The student, Kata Inocencio, who shared the role with Gloria, was an extremely sensitive actress who grabbed my attention because she was articulate in both English and Filipino. Lithe, good-looking and focused, she was also appropriately ambitious. Soon after her fine portrayal of Oryang, she joined the UP Concert Chorus.

News anchor

Later, I would see her on television as a news anchor, predictably self-assured and professional. No wonder she soon became one of ABS-CBN's leading newscasters.

Recently, she shifted her interest to social and religious concerns. I saw her hosting a show with strong religious overtones, bringing élan to what could otherwise be a humdrum program. However, when you mention Kata Inocencio, people remember the professional newscaster who brought national and international news straight to their living rooms.



Medical miracles on 'Oprah'

By Nestor U. Torre

SOME viewers fault Oprah Winfrey's TV show for being too goody-two-shoes and kneejerk-optimistic, but we like viewing it because it features guests and topics that are truly inspiring. A recent telecast on Star World was more inspiring than most:

The show focused on medical miracles—and they were truly amazing and inspiring. Oprah led off with a feature on a blind woman who was able to see again with the help of a special contact lens developed by the Boston Foundation for Sight.

WINFREY. Faith can move mountains.

Artificial tears

The device helps people with corneal diseases, but not those with retinal problems. It works by using a layer of artificial tears that corrects the defective details that result from corneal disease.

The woman featured by Oprah was ecstatic when she was able to regain her sight—and she had 20-20 vision!

This feature gives hope to blind people. But even sighted people like us benefited from the feature, because it reminded us not to take our sight for granted, like we often do, and to thank God each day that we can see and appreciate the beauty of His creation.

The second medical miracle involved SpeechEasy, a special device that helps stutterers speak normally. It is an ear implant that "fools the brain of the stutterer into thinking that somebody else is talking at the same time," as one of its inventors explained it to Oprah.

Instantaneous

The result was instantaneous and miraculous. Suddenly, tortured and tormented stutterers heard themselves speaking normally, and they and their relatives cried tears of relief and joy.

The device is said to be 80-percent effective—great news for the 60 million stutterers all over the world!

The feature was inspiring because one of its inventors used to be a stutterer himself, and he used his own pain to motivate him to come up with the invention.

As he put it, "God made me suffer terribly so I could help others." From this feature, we learned that difficulties can be turned around and put to good use if we rise above pitying ourselves, and use our suffering to help other people.

The third series of miracles was effected by a former top CIA "advanced disguise" expert. He used to make perfectly lifelike prostheses and masks to enable spies to assume new identities so they could do their sleuthing.

After he retired, he saw photos of people who had been horribly disfigured as a result of accident or illness, so he decided to use his expertise to help *them*.

The way he put it was especially apt: "I used to help people who wanted to go into hiding; now, I'm helping people who want to *come out* of hiding!"

Prosthetic mask

On Oprah's program, he was shown providing a prosthetic mask for a woman who had severe and ugly burns on her face, and helping another beneficiary who had lost an entire ear.

Again, the feature provided inspiration because it showed how even a super-tough CIA guy could, upon retirement, think of helping the disfigured live normally again.

The feature on prosthetics was followed by an even more miraculous story about a woman who had suffered a spinal cord injury that her doctors said would make her a quadraplegic for life. Through sheer dint of determination and faith, however, she "forced" herself to walk!

Yes, faith *can* move mountains.

Next came a feature on a couple who hadn't been blessed with a child for four years. So, they sought medical intervention

MEDICAL/ F3

SNEAK PREVIEW

'Joey' has potential to succeed on its own

By Rito P. Asilo

WHEN "Friends" was aired for the first time in 1994, it resisted the formulaic casting of big-name stars to carry new shows on primetime, and effectively "reformatted" the blueprint for the stereotypical TV comedy.

When the popular sitcom folded, it left a programming void that had TV networks scrambling for worthy substitutes. Of course, that's easier said than done.

LeBLANC. Ready to face new challenge.

Comedy spinoff

So, the NBC network turned to Matt LeBlanc to reprise his likable character, and to pick up where "Friends" left off. "Joey" is the first comedy spinoff since "Frasier" (another show that ended its run this year, along with "Sex and the City") came out of "Cheers" 11 years ago.

Having followed the collective high jinks of Rachel, Ross, Monica, Phoebe, Joey and Chandler, it was with great anticipation that we watched the "Joey" pilot. But, while the show delivered some genuine laughs and good performances, we couldn't help but compare it to its predecessor.

To be fair, "Joey" is no "Friends" knockoff. It has the potential to succeed on its own.

In the pilot, which will premiere next month, Joey Tribbiani leaves New York to try his luck in Hollywood, the actors' mecca in Los Angeles, after his agent lands him lead roles in two pilots: a "gritty cop show with violence and nudity" (*a la* "CSI" and "Oz") and, the second, "RN," a comedy about male nurses.

Brain surgeon

He rejects the latter because, as Joey explains, "I was already a brain surgeon on 'Days of Our Lives!'" Soon after, the cop show is canceled, while "RN" becomes a huge hit that catapults Joey's replacement to superstardom! Suddenly jobless, he realizes then that Hollywood is no Central Park.

Onboard to support LeBlanc are Drea de Matteo ("The Sopranos"), Paulo Costanzo ("Road Trip") and Ashley Scott ("Walking Tall"). De Matteo plays Joey's older sister, Gina, a former dental technician who now works as "hairdresser to the stars."

Upon Joey's arrival from Dallas (he erroneously gets off at his layover in Texas from New York), he is flabbergasted as she welcomes him: "You and Chandler should have moved here a long time ago—LA has a vibrant gay scene!"

Genetic abnormality

Gina's 20-year-old son, Michael, who still lives with her, wants to bunk up with his Uncle Joey because fellow engineers make fun of his dependence to his mother. He thinks that his mom had him when she was 22, although he was born when Gina was only 16. A Tribbiani "genetic abnormality," Michael works as a—hold your breath!—rocket scientist who designs mockup models for an escape module for the international space station.

"Joey" doesn't have the instant, endearing charm of "Friends," but it possesses its own unique appeal just the same. Some gags work (especially when Joey auditions for an entertainment show hosting job), and some don't (his flirtatious exchanges with Scott, who plays his beautiful but married neighbor).

This time, though, Joey's character is a wee bit more complex, and it's up to LeBlanc to put more nuances and depth into his portrayal as the series progresses.

Understandably, Matt feels the pressure for the series to do well, and to measure up to hype and expectations. But, he is ready to face the challenge. As Joey puts it: "Change is good. I tried hard to keep things from changing—but, it doesn't work. So, I'm giving change a shot!"

'Mulawin' ups TV's fantasy quotient

By Remy Umerez

TELESERYES have reached the saturation point. Thus, the element of fantasy has been infused:

From the depths of the sea emerges Marina, crawling her way into the hearts of mortals. GMA has countered with a spoof, "Marinara."

Revving up local TV's fantasy quotient, GMA now transports viewers to the mythical world of winged creatures known as "Mulawin"—half-bird, half-human beings who protect both their tribe and the human race from the wrath of the Ravenas, winged subversives who seek revenge against humans.

Lead stars Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin tackles roles they never imagined they would play someday.

GUTIERREZ. Plays male lead role on GMA-7's *fantaserye*.

Results

About his feathered costume, Richard says, "I feel like I lose five pounds everytime I fly. Preparations take hours due to the body cast I have to put on. You feel good when you see the results on the TV screen, *pero sa totoo lang, nananakit ang buo kong katawan.*"

Richard plays Aguiluz, the young Mulawin who is willing to sacrifice his life and future for his undying love for Alwina.

The dilemma of falling in love with a human being is the main conflict of the *telefantasya* directed by Dominic Zapata and Lore Reyes.

The *teleserye* gives rise to the new loveteam of Richard and Angel. New discovery Dennis Trillo, heir of the Montenegro clan in the story, provides another love conflict.

Mulawin also features the acting comeback of Lloyd Samartino, Romnick Sarmenta, Gary Estrada and Pia Pilapil.

Anti-hero roles

Samartino and Sarmenta both delineate anti-hero roles, while Ara Mina depicts the characters of Veronica and the vengeful Vultra.

Zoren Legaspi is the chief warrior who falls for Veronica. And the gifted Amy Austria plays the woman who adopts Alwina as her own daughter.

The Gutierrezes, Eddie and Richard, don't play father and son in the story. Eddie is cast as Dakila, eldest and wisest counselor of the Mulawin.

Food trip to remember

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

SEATTLE, Washington—After a long weekend in Vancouver, Canada, my family and friends decided to drive to Seattle.

A few meters from the US border, you'll find a small dairy company that makes its own butter, milk and ice cream. It is a must to stop and indulge in its thick, creamy and delicious ice cream. I had a cone of fudgy chocolate.

Dinner

A few miles into Bellingham, we stopped for dinner at Jack in the Box. I had a grilled Sourdough Burger, butter-toasted bread with thick burger filling, a slice of American cheese, bacon and tomato.

Heavenly! I love American burgers, particularly those from Carls Jr., Burger King and Jack in the Box.

That meal lasted us until the next morning. Our hosts, Lily and Dino Go, served us Crispy Cream donuts for breakfast. These had to be the most delicious donuts! If cold, just give them a 10-second roll in the microwave. They are a sweet tooth's dream.

We visited shops like Costco and QFC grocery. In Costco, the food samples will last you the whole day. We got a choice grade boneless Prime Rib of Beef, which we roasted that evening. —Funny how easy it is to promise to observe your diet on a full tummy!

Highlights

Highlights of the trip were the garage sales. As the saying goes: "The garbage of one is the treasure of another." Before this, I could never understand why my wife Tessa, my sister Stella and brother Bong were addicted to them. Now, I know.

We drove to downtown Seattle to have lunch in a mall called Wadjimaya, a food complex full of Asian products. Inside was a food court with various cuisines: Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Italian and American. The Pinoy display needed improvement in presentation. Most of the dishes were floating in oil! *Sayang.*

Happy eating!

Medical miracles on 'Oprah'

From page F2

by means of *in vitro* fertilization. Two embryos were implanted in the woman's womb.

Later, however, *four* fetuses were discovered growing in her. What had happened? The two embryos had prospered—*and* she had also gotten pregnant, the natural way, with twins!

So, the couple had been gifted with more blessings than they had prayed for. As Oprah aptly put it, "They had prayed for four years for one miracle—now, they have one miracle for each of those four years they waited!

The show's final feature was on two sets of Siamese twins, both conjoined at the head. One set was successfully separated, and the second set was being slowly prepped up for eventual separation.

The procedure had been performed only seven times in the past, and in three instances, one of the twins died. So, the risks were deemed enormous, but the procedure was resorted to just the same, so the conjoined twins could live a normal life.

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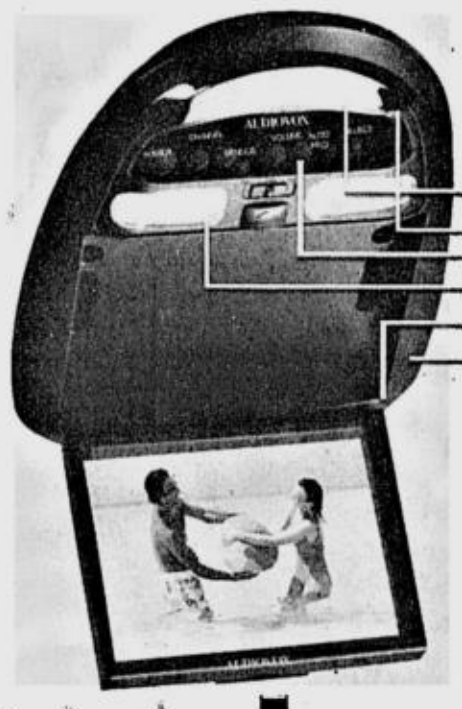

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The way you move	Outkast	umove
Roses	Outkast	roses1

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Dying	Five for Fighting	dying
A Little bit	MYMP	alittlebit
Sexy Naughty Bitchy	Tata Young	sexynaughty
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August 8, 2004, Sunday
3:00pm • Atrium A

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WRock 96.3
CAR STICK-ON ACTIVITY
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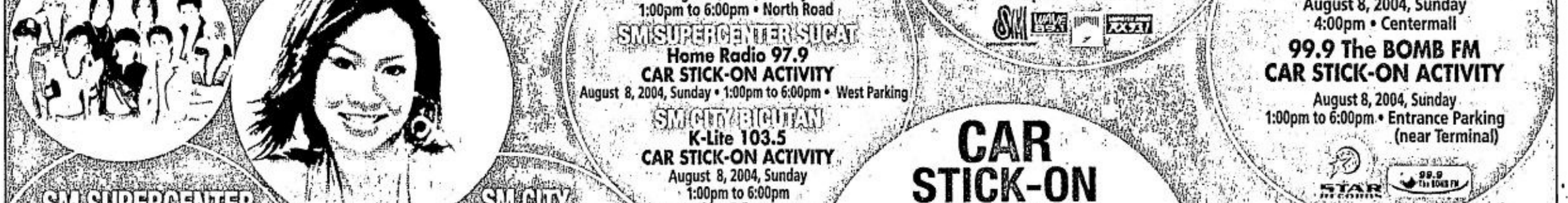

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Cellshocked

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

THE SWAPPING Corner of a buy-and-sell magazine offers some pretty exciting deals. Especially if you're the lucky owner of the latest cellphone models, particularly those equipped with the prized digi-cam feature. For you can trade in those precious phones in exchange for a host of goods such as, just to name a few: Gucci perfume, motorcycles, car TVs, Doc Martens leather shoes, six-seater dining table sets, colored printers, exercise equipment and laptop computers. If you fancy living creatures, there are also golden retriever puppies and male daschunds up for barter.

I casually asked my brother what I could get in exchange for my own mobile phone. He just shot me a look and said that my used disposable contact lenses had more exchange value. Indeed, my poor phone that has been by my side for so many years has been the butt of jokes among my peers, who claim that a Debbie Gibson album is more up-to-date than my phone will ever be. For some reason, though, even in such a cellphone crazy culture as ours, I never felt the pressure to upgrade to ultra-high tech models, if only for the fact that I subscribe to the principle of Occam's Razor for living in these technological times.

William of Occam upheld the Aristotelian principle that entities should not be multiplied beyond what is necessary. (Or it can simply be said with a K.I.S.S.—Keep It Simple, Stupid!) Thus, the simplest explanation is the solution to the quandary. The quandary in this case being interpersonal communication, and the simplest solution for me is a phone that has two basic functions: calling and texting. Oh, and the ring tone "Roadhouse Blues" by The Doors, which I've discovered to be the best way to communicate with fellow fans of Jim Morrison.

Thus, when my antedated phone croaked recently and I had to face the reality of letting it go, it was like losing an old friend. On the other hand, my friends of the warm-blooded sort cheered wickedly upon hearing the news (the cold bastards).

Fully aware of my inadequacies regarding any form of tech talk and digital gadgetry, my brother agreed to accompany me to a dealer on my purchasing sortie. Snaking through rows and rows of colorful casings, galleries of coiled black wires, and ladies crying out from a nearby stall, *"Dibidi! Dibidi! Dibidi!,"* my brother led me to his *suki*. The conversation between the salesperson and myself went something like this:

Me: "I'd like to buy a new phone."

Salesdude: *"Aling* model?"

Me: "Um ...*'yung* blue. *'Yung may* soft buttons."

Salesdude: (Bewildered, turning to my brother who pointed to a few archetypes so tiny, they could have passed for hearing aids) *"Depende sa gusto mong* features. White screen display? Animated screen? Internet connectivity, GPRS, MMS, AM/FM radio, 500 phonebook capacity, flashlight, digicam..."

Me: Eh? Whatsdut?! *Basta may* dictionary *ang* text messaging."

Salesdude: (Suspicious now) *Lahat naman meron*. May English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, French dictionary...

Me: OK... sold!

By this time, my embarrassed brother had already sneaked off to the pirated DVD section to check out the Tarantino titles. Meanwhile, I struggled with my new purchase, holding the phone close to my ear and wondering how I could prevent the piece of hardware from falling into my inner ear cavity. Welcome to the world of modern telecommunications, I told myself, alternately transfixed by the animated, colored screen and mesmerized by the polytone ring.

Buy and cell

I never imagined that a simple hardware upgrade would instantly "elevate" my status in the food chain. In the past week alone, armed with the spanking new phone that I have yet to figure out, more and more people have come out of the woodwork lauding me for finally "evolving," as though I had suddenly developed another DNA strand.

Pinoys have elevated the cellphone craze to the level of sheer lunacy, engendering a unique subculture that many times escapes logic. Filipinos are perpetually in the news for being at the forefront of the textual revolution, collectively sending millions of SMS messages a day (and even sparking a midnight revolution called Edsa Dos via mass text messaging). Kids who haven't even hit puberty now exchange phone numbers. At that age, my playmates were still the mercu-

CAN you be my phone pal?

HELLOOO?! Call girls in the house

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Newfangled phones seem to sprout everyday, sporting features that often have little to do with streamlining communication

rial Tooth Fairy and Cookie Monster. About a month ago, I heard the news that a gym near my place was held up, and that instead of asking for wallets, watches or cash, the felons only asked the hapless victims for their cellphones.

Gimmickry, mimicry

Newfangled gimmicks seem to sprout everyday. Many times, they have nothing to do with ensuring streamlined communication—in fact, some even cultivate a vicious cycle of confusion.

I can't even sit through dinner at a restaurant without hearing a cacophony of specialized downloaded ring tones (often giving away the user's musical preferences) and message alert tones, much less conduct a straight conversation without being interrupted every other sentence because the person needs to respond to an SMS.

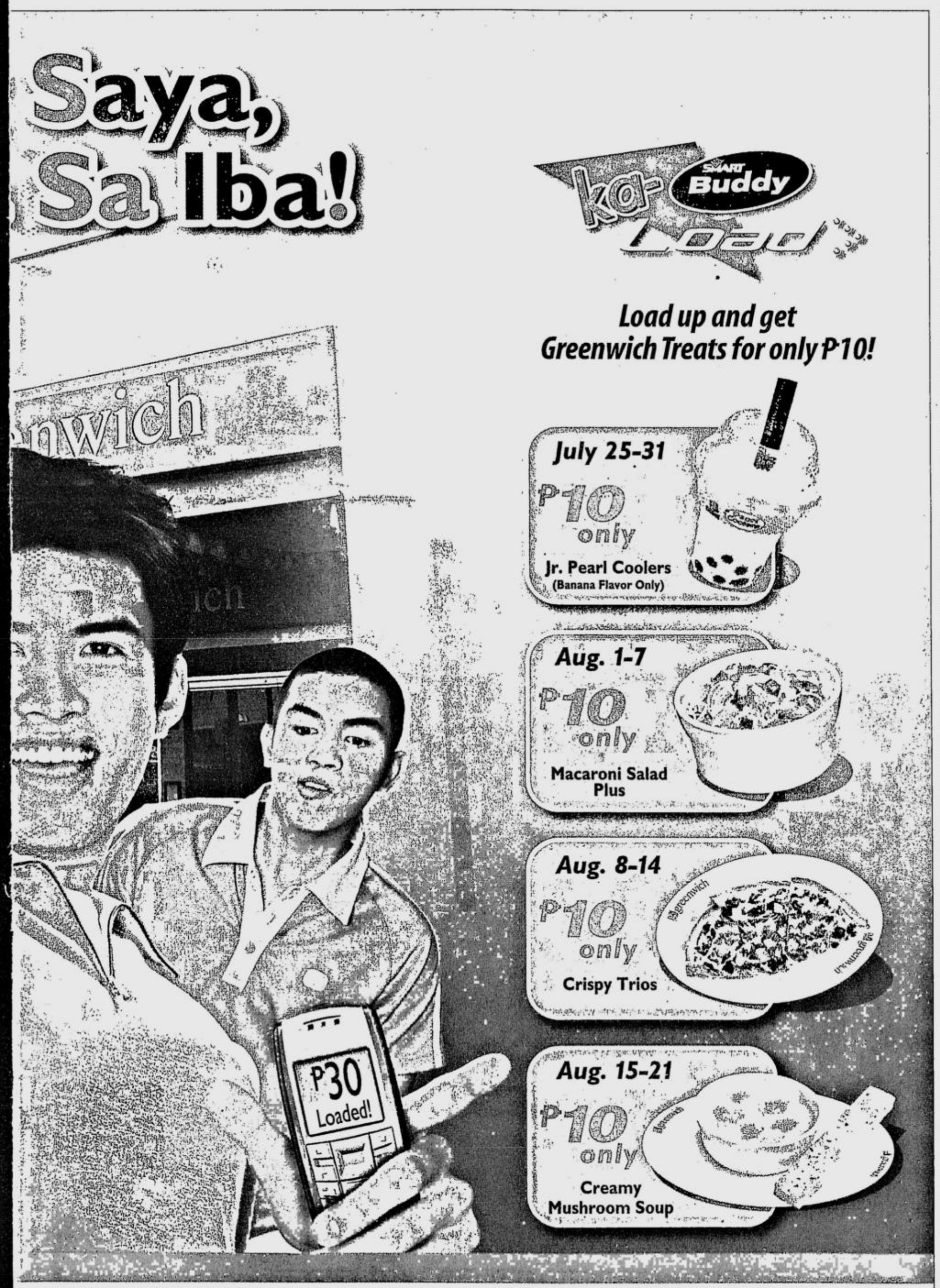
While on the subject of texting, it still blows my mind to know that there are specified numbers to text for the latest show biz *tsismis*, inspirational quotes, Bible passages and even your possible soul mate. (I'm still waiting for a number I could text to confess my sins and be able to receive instant, short message absolutions). There are interactive channels on cable TV where viewers could text all day so their greetings and declarations of love can be posted on a scrolling screen in the hopes that their objects of affection are tuned in. They might as well toss messages in a bottle into the open sea.

And even as I'm still getting used to the fact that yes, it is possible to take snapshots with a phone, I have to deal with the growing trend of this thing called the "ring back feature"—the motley, maddening compositions, voice-overs and inane recordings that come right back at 'ya when you're calling someone up. For a small price, boys can have pre-recorded sexy starlets pretending to answer their phones in a whisky-sour manner to feign post-coital exhilaration. I once rang a friend who had jumped headset-first into this bizarre trend, and I was instantly hit with paranoia as an irate man threatened to arrest me for illegal DVD purchases.

Then just when we think we still had the choice not to text someone back when we don't want to, another ruse was cooked up to strip us of our free will. The gimmick called Giftxt ensures that a person who receives an SMS will text back because it also deprives him of the valid excuse of not having any credit left. Of course, that new ploy doesn't shield the ardent texter from further anxiety, because people still have the freedom to text back, "F*** off!"

All this leads me to wonder whether we have locked ourselves within our own cells. Never before does that line from an old Eagles song ring louder: "we are just prisoners here of our own device."

(Email the author at inca_orange@yahoo.com)



Unhappy . . .

From page G4

mohawked mercenary of madness in Taxi Driver. Kris Aquino in The Vizconde Massacre. God help us.

The reality, of course, is nothing quite so celluloid. Depression is never charming and can be quite frightening to those involved. Approximately 20 percent of all women, 10 percent of all men, and 5 percent of all adolescents worldwide are affected by depression (figures susceptible to seasonal changes and global warfare). And we're not talking about your garden variety "bad day" because everyone has one of those. Depression can be defined as a persistent feeling of sadness and despondency, accompanied by symptoms. These can include a loss of interest in life, chronic fatigue, fractured concentration, bouts of restlessness, sleeping and/or eating disorders. This is a serious condition that, if unattended to, can result in tragedy. Grumpy can be a bitch of a dwarf.

Off the bat, I am going to say that I am neither qualified nor willing to dispense any kind of medical or psychiatric advice regarding depression—I'm currently battling multiple libel suits and I don't want your legal case on my desk. If your emotional turmoil has reached dangerous states then you should seek professional help as soon as possible. Actually, even if it hasn't reached the point of self-inflicted harm, go talk to someone qualified. It might be something...er...normal, like PMS, midlife crisis, exboyfriend syndrome, delayed puberty or something hormonal—like James Dean in Rebel With Menopause.

You could discover that your depression is a result of a medical or hereditary condition (or, as they joke in hospital humor, someone urinated in your gene pool), which can be monitored or even rectified. I'm not too well-versed on all of them (I thought Bipolar Disorder was Eskimo dyslexia), but there is a whole slew of cranial cases which list depression as one of their identifying symptoms, so, once again, contacting a professional would be the best thing to do (especially if this has been going on for some time). There has always been a stigma concerning mental illness thus it is understandable that most people would consider a visit to a doctor with extreme reluctance, so let's get this out of the way: depression does not mean you're crazy! All my ex-girlfriends undergo regular therapy for depression and they're not crazy. Just infinitely sad. Understandably.

Anyway, I am only comfortable dispensing general tips for managing depression. Handling this condition is no easy task, but it can be broken down to three basic stages: recognizing depression, seeking treatment, and living with it. Let us assume that the first two stages have been addressed accordingly. Then what?

The foremost thing to do is to try and think positively. While it may appear to be paradoxical, it is essential to counteract negative emotions with a positive outlook. Even failure can be cultivated properly to harvest constructive elements as long as you are able to learn from it. Learn to identify the positive in any situation and focus on the optimistic potential of going from there. Work on your self-confidence. Stare at the mirror regularly and affirm yourself—quietly, lest someone hear you and laugh, causing further damage to an already fragile ego.

You may find that people are not being attentive to your particular needs. Assert yourself, learning to express your wishes firmly, without becoming an overbearing pain in the ass—nobody likes a moody mood pecker. Surround yourself with understanding friends and family, who will support you without becoming patronizing or condescending. The last thing you need is a buddy who awkwardly attempts to sympathize by saying, "You know, it's okay to be loser." And since we're discussing the social aspect of this problem, don't be afraid to talk about it with other people. Emotion released is a load lightened. Like bowel movement.

Keep on moving. The absolute worst thing you can do is to surrender to the depression and wallow in self-pity and dejection, taking root in a corner or your house, afraid to leave and face the world, seeking solace in the shared misery of The Buzz. Do stuff! Set goals for yourself and actively seek to achieve these standards. The direction will provide you with the motivation to succeed. It doesn't matter if the goals are relatively mundane—like finishing the complete works of Proust—as long as it gives you something constructive to do. Take a break and take a change. Go see friends from another era of your past life. Change your scenery and visit the churches of Bohol or the mountains of Sagada. Change your preferences and listen to MoTown classics or watch The Three Stooges reruns. Change your underwear. Lethargy only increases despondency and results in the eventual atrophy of the spirit. So keep on moving and don't stop. For as the famous publishing adage goes, "Stop depresses!" (I am so sorry about that one).

Finally, don't hurt yourself. Please. There is enough grief in the world and, besides, that just isn't cool.

Everyone suffers the random "bad day." If you discover that your mood refuses to surface above sea level for a considerable time, then it may be advisable to check the engines of your sub. Modern medicine has evolved dramatically and an impressive arsenal of medical strategies is available to those suffering from depression. But improvement begins before a pill is ingested or a doctor is consulted. As cliché as it sounds, beating the blues starts with you. Just look at me. I used to be an obnoxious, pessimistic, anxiety-ridden crank who was critical of everything. Then I became a writer and got paid for just being that way on a national scale. This made me happy.

(Email author at bohemiansamurai@yahoo.com)

Unhappy Days

Dear Man About Town,

Lately, I have been suffering from severe mood swings. One mihute, I'm feeling fine, the next I'm crying uncontrollably. I have always considered myself to be a happy person, laid-back and carefree. But for the past few months I've been getting crankier and more irritable, even over small things. My friends and family have noticed the change in my attitude and have been very supportive, but I'm not sure if it's getting better. I'm not too sure I want to visit a psychiatrist or take any kind of medication. What could be a cause for all this, and how

Chuck Dy

am I supposed to get better?

MOODY. I've always enjoyed that word. Phonetically, it's just damn sexy. The first syllable is a low, guttural cow-sound siphoned from deep within the rib cage, reverberated up the back of the throat, and kissed out of pursed lips like a promise of intimacy. The second syllable is my last name, and there's nothing sexier than that. The meaning is likewise alluring, conjuring images of dark, brooding, beautiful persons hunched over a glass of smoky Scotch or fingering an elegant Chesterfield, their mercurial unpredictability just as attractive as it is repulsive. Marlon Brando, alternating between suave calm and wretched anguish in A Streetcar Named Desire. Robert De Niro, oscillating from amiable cabbie to

UNHAPPY/ G3

Over the course of a family's lifetime, welcome changes are a constant. For these changes, 360° Living, the property re-imagineers, offer The Trails of La Marea.

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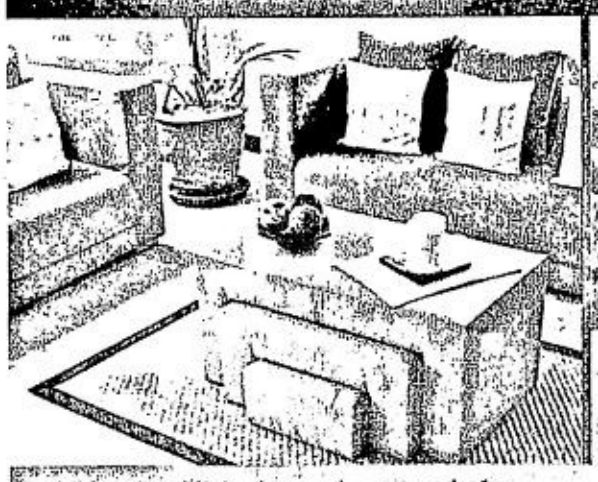
The Trails of La Marea by 360° Living
Home to Welcome Change



Multi-functional living areas are cozy nooks for welcoming guests or spending time with the family.

Amenities include a pool for weekends with family and friends.

that answers families' needs today and tomorrow. **Intelligent space planning.** Each area, with their own functions and built-in benefits, is designed for the way families live. **Built-in flexibility**. Room for expansion. As the family's needs grow, the home grows right alongside. Spaces are multi-functional, ready for any use. **Comfort within reach**. The homes afford the luxury of comfort at a great value. **Rooms with a view**. Windows are bigger than usual and are strategically placed to allow more natural light and to provide a better view of the outdoors.

Moreover, within the community, facilities and amenities help enhance the family's quality of life. The fern garden is a natural activity area lush with landscaped greenery. The playground is a kids' haven for frolicking about. The swimming pool, surrounded by trees, is a refreshing getaway from the tropical sun.

The community itself is ideal for welcome change, for neighborly interaction yet with respect for one's privacy.

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– An eager shopper

Lemon-aide

Giselle Segovia

IF YOU watched Super!'s anniversary bash closely, you would notice that we unveiled one sin less than the seven we owned up to. On Sunday, Aug. 29, we will finally allow ourselves to purge our system of the last deadly avarice. For Greed, Super! organized a celebrity bazaar. Clothes and accessories will be sold by Super! and Superstars alike in very, very reasonable prizes to the people who are humble enough to admit to their greed. Come one, come all, spend your money on us! Actually, we're not completely corrupt. A sizeable portion of the proceeds from this bazaar will go to charity.

I heard somebody said that money cannot buy happiness. Now this is true ... sometimes. In another circumstance, I would be a hypocrite to suppress the giddy feeling I get when I acquire a fantastic pair of heels. I am quite certain many would share this truth with me.

Forgive us.

Saturday, August 7

You shouldn't need reminding but I'm giving it, anyway. BIGFISH's Godskitchen featuring DJ John "00" Fleming and TC will storm the NBC Tent tonight. Gates open around 9 to 10 p.m., tickets are available at the venue. Passes go for P500 but Smart and Addict subscribers get a 50% discount. Tips: Eat, load up on rest before coming and wear comfortable shoes. It's gonna be one helluva dancing night!

Sunday, August 8

Unleash the bookworms in you and hit the month-long sale at Powerbooks. Stock up on the newest titles or even old ones that you've been eyeing. Sometimes, the best way to de-stress is to turn off your phone and curl up with a good book. Powerbooks has branches at Greenbelt 4 (tel. 757-6428), Megamall (635-2898 and 99), Alabang (850-5662 and 63) and Glorietta (752-7075).

Monday, August 9

Make sure you don't miss the last day of "Galak ng Paglalaro." This exhibit features Anthony Fermin's genre paintings in acrylic and watercolor, at the Museo Pambata, Bata sa Mundo Hall, Roxas Blvd. corner South Drive, Manila.

Tuesday, August 10

"Water, Air and Earth," will be on its last day. The exhibit features the works of Josemari de Leon Imao—paintings and pieces of sculpture—at the National Telecommunications Commission Gallery, BIR Road, East Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City. Also featured as a special treat are three acrylic paintings on canvas by the artist's father, the multi-awarded Tausug artist, Abdul Mari Imao.

Wednesday, August 11

Check out the movie "Eternal Sunshine for the Spotless Mind," starring Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet. I haven't seen it, so I'm not vouching for it just yet—but it certainly looks promising. I'm guessing it would be "Vanilla Sky" meets "When a Man Loves a Woman." It will be on its second week by this day so hurry up.

Thursday, August 12

If you haven't checked out the new and much-improved Club V, you are surely missing out. Tonight is one of the best nights to go, as the "Deluxe" party series is at its peak. Get the best of R&B and hip-hop grooves and party with fantastic people. Attire: Glam.

Friday, August 13

It's Friday the 13th! But they say this it's going to be a lucky day, this year—isn't that great? Catch the final day for Nilo Ilarde's exhibit at the Magnet Gallery, Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas corner Sedeno Street, Makati City. At night, watch out for different parties that will break out at the last minute to celebrate Friday the 13th—believe me, there should be a lot.

The word for the bored:

"I wouldn't be able to answer that question; I'm happily married."

–Director Spike Lee (when asked whom he'd marry if he were gay)

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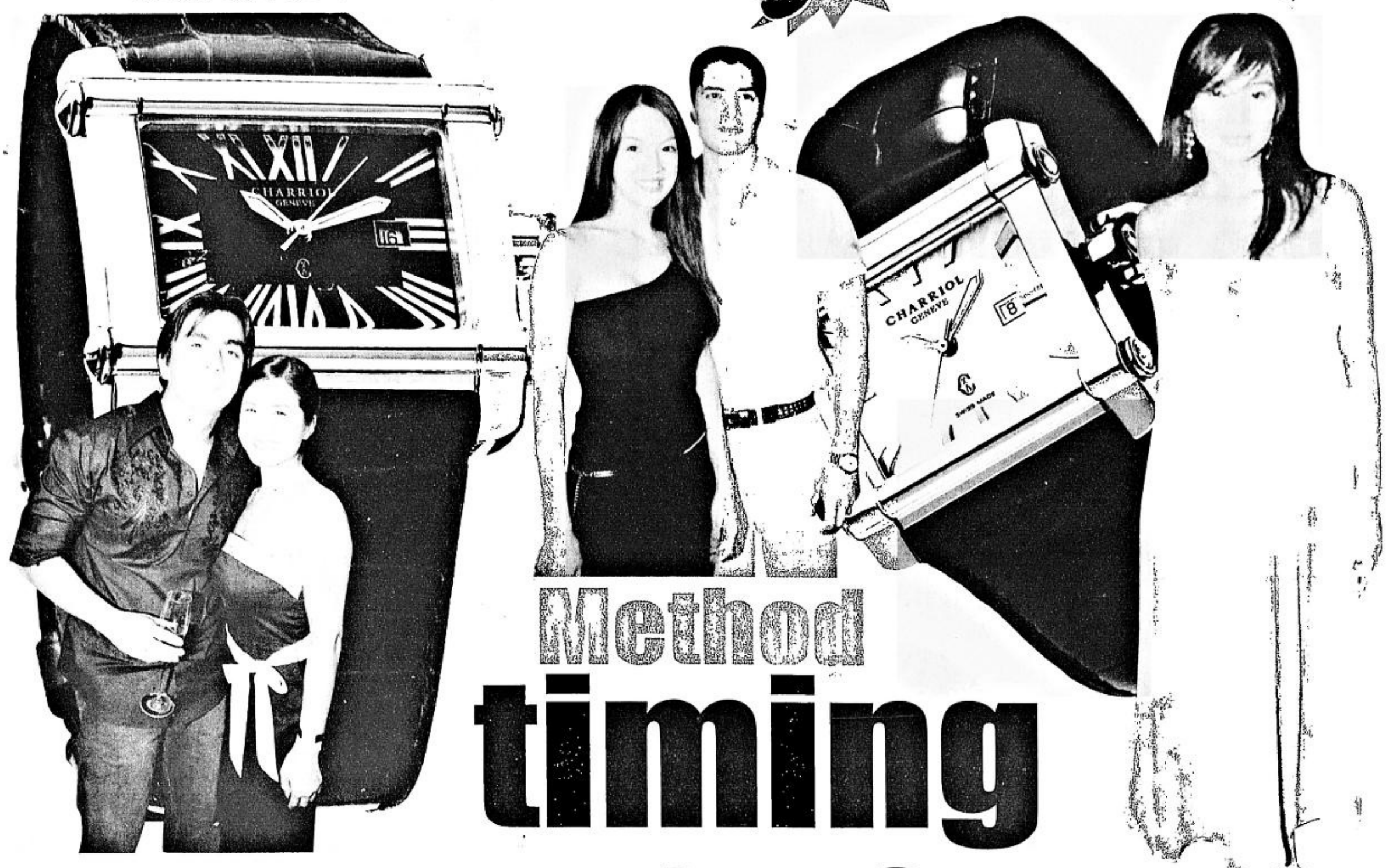


Method timing

Tim Yap

WHILE Frederico Fellini didn't create the paparazzi, his masterpiece "La Dolce Vita" inspired the term (there's a photographer character named Paparazzo). Last week, the scene's shutterbugs went bananas over the action that went with Philippe Charriol "Actor" launch.

With the lines between show biz and society getting blurred these days (credit goes to the alliance formed between Film Academy of the Philippines or FAP Awards head honcho Albert Martinez and Store Specialists, Inc.'s main man Anton Huang), the Greenbelt 4 space rolled out the red carpet once again with real life actors inhabiting the halls to herald the coming of the Philippe Charriol "Actor" watch.

"For the quintessential actor, the world is his stage. That is why the glamorous actor was the inspiration for this new line," explained Anton during the cocktails as idols from the big screen (guys I grew up watching on the silver screen—I don't want to name them coz it makes them feel old) paraded along the lobby onwards to the Charriol store to meet the lady behind Philippe, Annick.

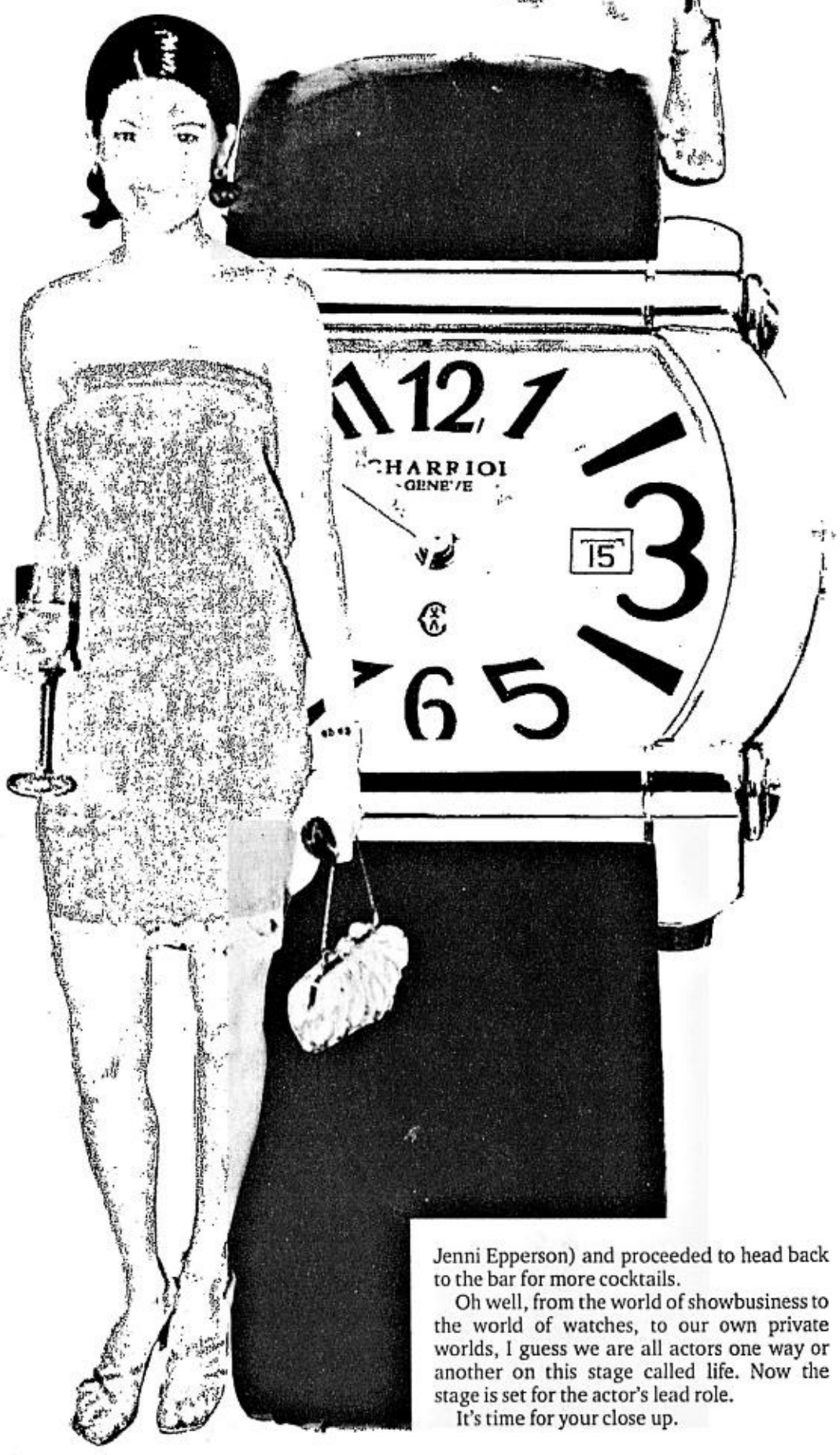
Inside the store, society denizens stared at the "Actor" watch, with its unusually large dimensions, whether in the Rectangle or the Tonneau version (designed horizontally—a total switch from the conventional vertical watch design). Kerching, kerching! Outside, they stared at the likes of Albert, Gary Estrada, Aubrey Miles and Troy Montero, Boy Abunda, Assunta da Rossi, among other glitz biz namedroppables. Schwing, schwiing!

I even spotted a fashion insider run up to Eddie Garcia, unabashedly introduced herself and stayed with him the whole night. Star struck, much!

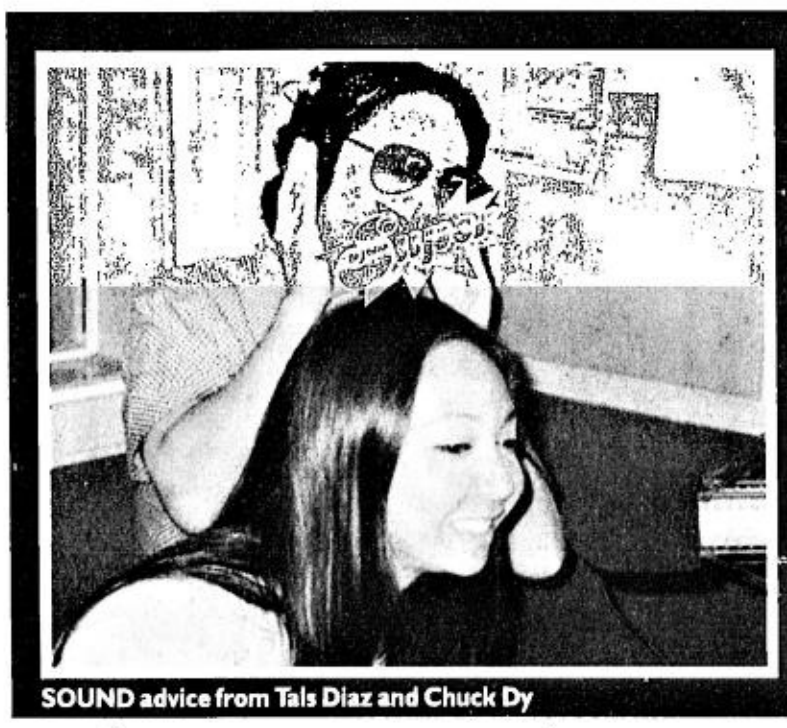
Within the periphery of the Greenbelt 4 area were kibitzers behind the velvet rope, curiously observing the actors (in this case, real and reel) mingle and schmooze away. Before heading to my next hop, I looked at the ones left and spotted quite a few stars' wrists already "Actor" adorned. I saw Albert again, did a Zoolander "walk off" (along with Just Shop's Jenni Epperson) and proceeded to head back to the bar for more cocktails.

Oh well, from the world of showbusiness to the world of watches, to our own private worlds, I guess we are all actors one way or another on this stage called life. Now the stage is set for the actor's lead role.

It's time for your close up.



Who is Chuck Dy?



SOUND advice from Tals Diaz and Chuck Dy

GET to know Superl's resident advice president by tuning into 103.5 K-Lite today at 11 a.m. The mysterious, dashing and never publicly seen columnist of Man About Town will remain unseen by the public but will nevertheless treat listeners to his dose of ill logic. He co-stars with Superl columnist Tals Diaz of Out the Window to tackle everything good, bad and ugly about Pinoy youth.

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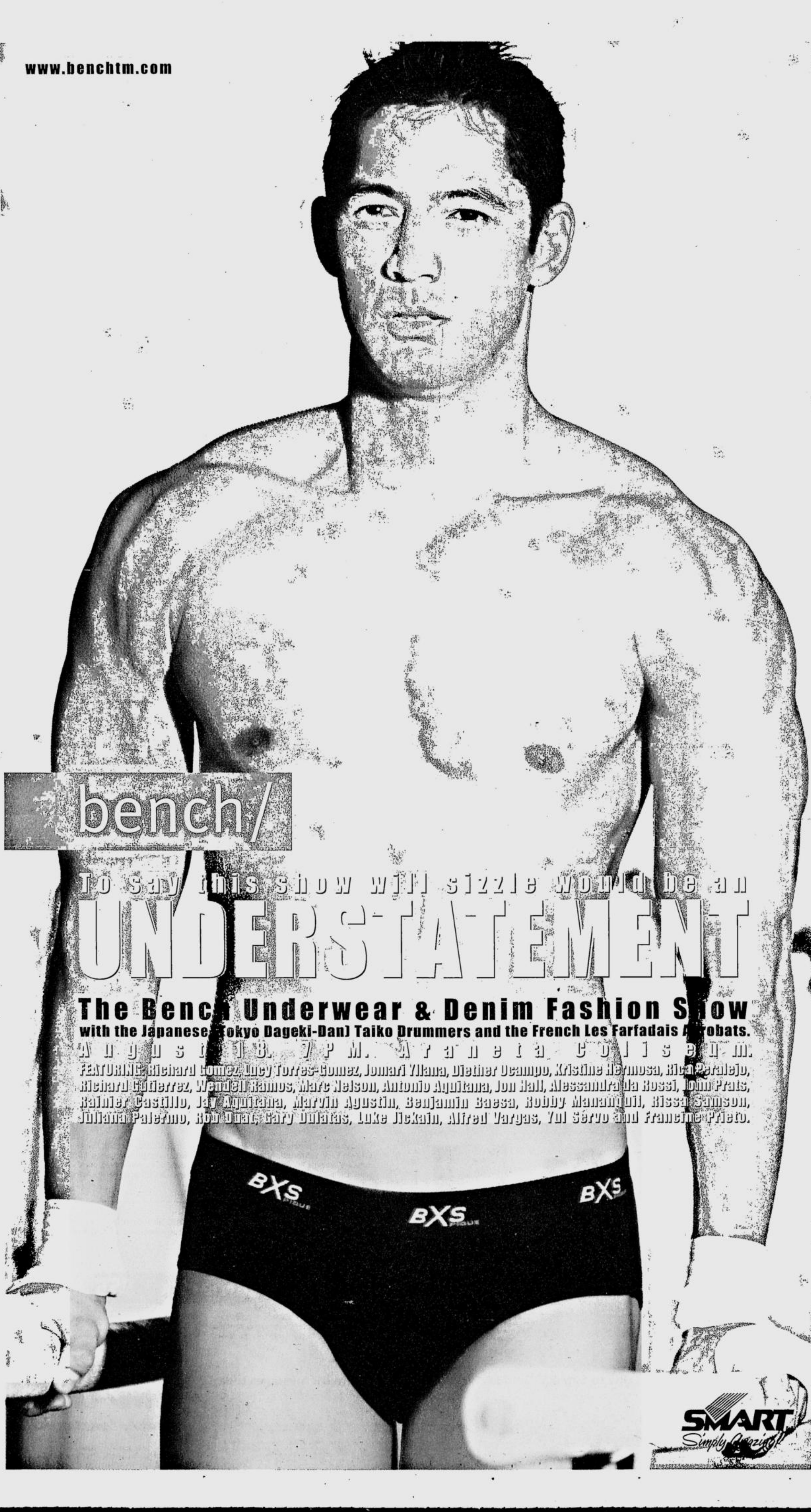

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Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

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Get the lowdown on what's in and out from funny man Vhong Navarro, Toni Gonzaga and the gang of tv's hit news gag show.
WAZZUP
a world to discover
ROBINSONS Malls

"THOSE dudes are fossils."

That was my cousin's verdict as the video for "Ch-Check It Out" by the Beastie Boys splashed across the Wega. Spotting the goofy Brooklyn trio's armada of crow's feet, gray hair, and expanding waistlines, however, I couldn't agree with her more. Was this "Nip/Tuck" or MTV? So it was a huge relief when the totally unretro Dashboard Confessional came on next. With a glass of skim milk as a microphone, we sang along to "Vindicated" with all the emo disaffection we could muster. See, my cousin—whom I will hide under the name Samantha, after her favorite "Sex and the City" harlot—is a psychotic Chris Carrabba groupie. (Chris is the voice and, apparently, the face of Dashboard Confessional.) Samantha describes him as "so fetch," a phrase she put on heavy rotation after watching "Mean Girls" for the nth time two nights ago. That's essentially the same thing she said about the other "has-been hotties" she used to worship, like James Marsters from "Buffy, the Vampire Slayer" and Kevin Zegers of "Air Bud." Oh no.

Slouching so much that she was nearly horizontal, Samantha then took off the chunky diamond mini-hoop earrings her mom lets her wear to school. She also wished out loud, wanting to be taller so that she could go to the prom, bling and all. I, on the other hand, sat up to turn out a short ennui-filled show-and-tell about the Mount Everest of magazines in my room. Among them was a back issue of The Fader Magazine with Kurt Cobain as its cover star. After pointing out to her that no, Kurt was *not* the lead singer of The Vines, I picked up the intellectual-lite conversation and talked about a few transcultural theories I read about in Trace, another alternative title. As the new Nelly video blared in the background, Sam looked at me like I was spewing hooey. This was exactly the same Alexis Bledel, deer-in-headlights stare she puts on when her parents start talking about religion, politics, and other sleep-inducing topics. I took that as my cue to can it and go back to discussing "The O.C." After all, this cousin of mine was only 10.

At the risk of sounding like an old fuddy-dud, I couldn't help but look back on my own childhood. At 10, I was either parked in front of the TV watching "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" videos, playing with my Nintendo, or burying Cobra Commander at the bottom of the pool. Designer labels were exclusively for grown-ups so I solved my fashion emergencies with Guess? jeans and shirts from Polo Ralph Lauren Boys. Aside from that, my taste in music encompassed the "Alvin and the Chipmunks" Christmas album since my awareness only geared up with the advent of grunge a couple years later. We were all 10 at one point in our lives, but back in the day we were only called "kids." In contrast, 10-year-olds of the 00's, like my cousin, are eminently dubbed as "tweens."

Pre-Teen Beat

The word "tween" is shorthand for "between child and teenager." Although most believe that tweens fall between the ages of 10-15, Laura Batts of the Advanced Research Laboratories in Costa Mesa, California, says that tweens are defined as those within the ages of 8-12. Whatever the case may be, tweens have always existed but marketers continue to inaccurately claim their discovery. More likely, what they may have chanced upon and explained was their purchasing power.

SMELLS/ I3

HOPE DANGLES ON A STRING. Chris Carrabba of Dashboard Confessional

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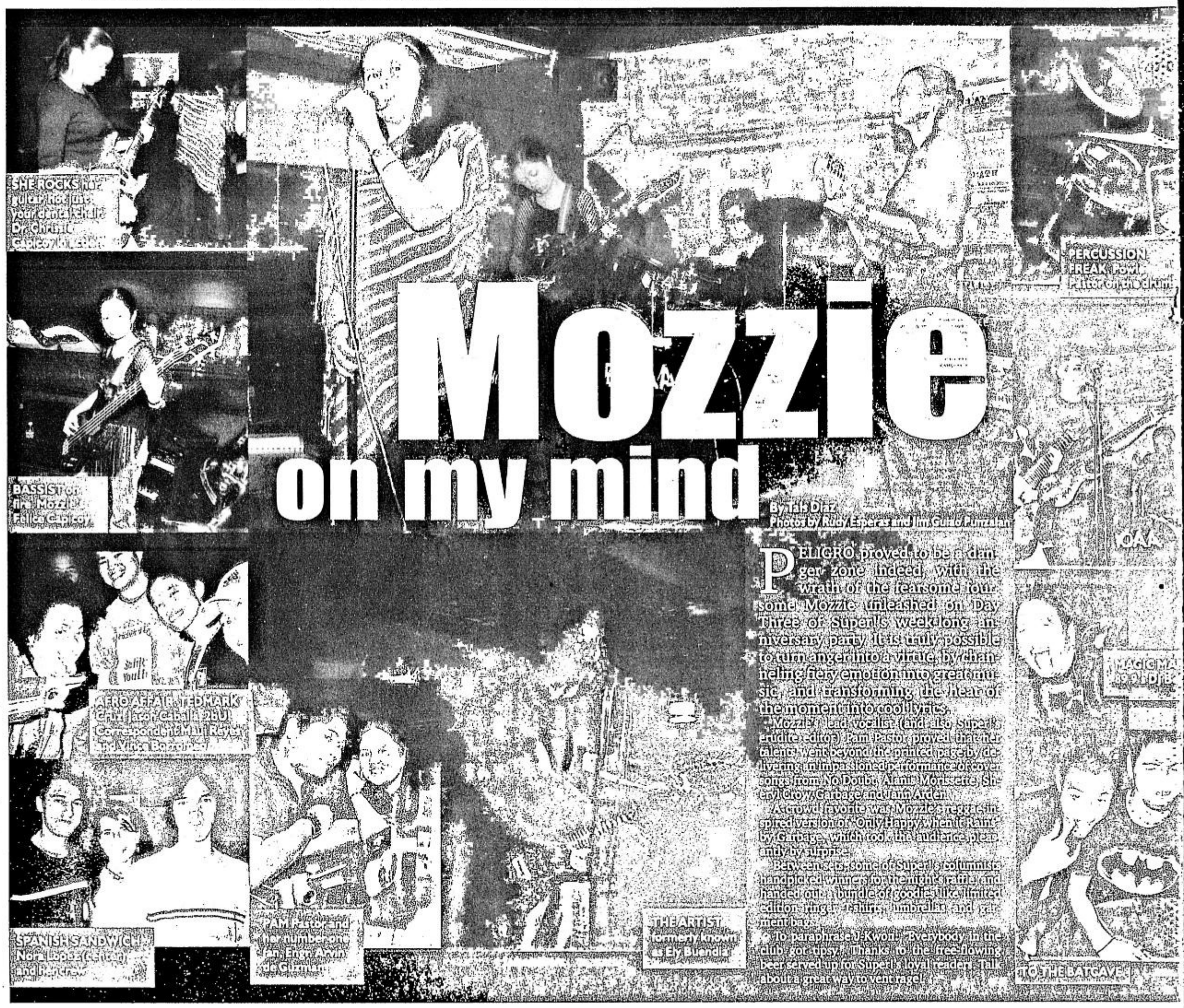


Mozzie on my mind

By Tats Diaz
Photos by Rudy Esperas and Jim Guillo Funzalan

PELIGRO proved to be a danger zone indeed, with the wrath of the fearsome foursome Mozzie unleashed on Day Three of Super!'s week-long anniversary party. It is truly possible to turn anger into a virtue, by channeling fiery emotion into great music, and transforming the heat of the moment into cool lyrics.

Mozzie's lead vocalist (and also Super!'s erudite editor) Pam Pastor proved that her talents went beyond the printed page by delivering an impassioned performance of cover songs from No Doubt, Alanis Morissette, Sheryl Crow, Garbage and Jann Arden.

A crowd favorite was Mozzie's reggae-inspired version of "Only Happy When It Rains" by Garbage, which rocked the audience pleasantly by surprise.

Between sets, some of Super!'s columnists handpicked winners for the night's raffle, and handed out a bundle of goodies like limited edition rings, t-shirts, umbrellas and garment bags.

To paraphrase J-Kwon, "Everybody in the club got tipsy." Thanks to the free-flowing beer served up for Super!'s loyal readers. Tall about a great way to vent rage!

Competing bands down to 4 for Goodyear Eagle F1 Music Revolution Finals

THE RACE was fast, furious, and loud as nine bands played their guts out for pole position at the Goodyear Eagle F1 Music Revolution's Final Screening held last July 22 at Peligro located at Salcedo Street in Legaspi Village, Makati. It was full-throttle on talent and creativity as the competitors had to play one song, original or cover, and one original jingle inspired by Goodyear tire's characteristics of providing driving pleasure, driving performance and driving confidence.

The Music Revolution competition rolls on the tracks of the revolutionary tire company's new breakthrough in tire technology, the Goodyear Eagle F1 GSD3, in cooperation with Pulp and MTV Ink. The final race for Eagle F1 Band of the Night, the Best Drummer, Best Guitarist, and Best Vocalist will be decided at Le Pavillon on August 7, 6:00 p.m. onwards.

IF YOU'VE got the beat...

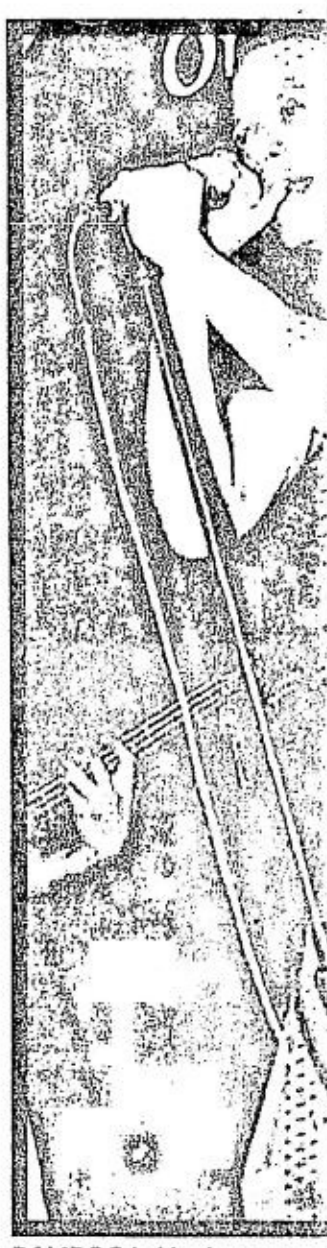
PSYWAR

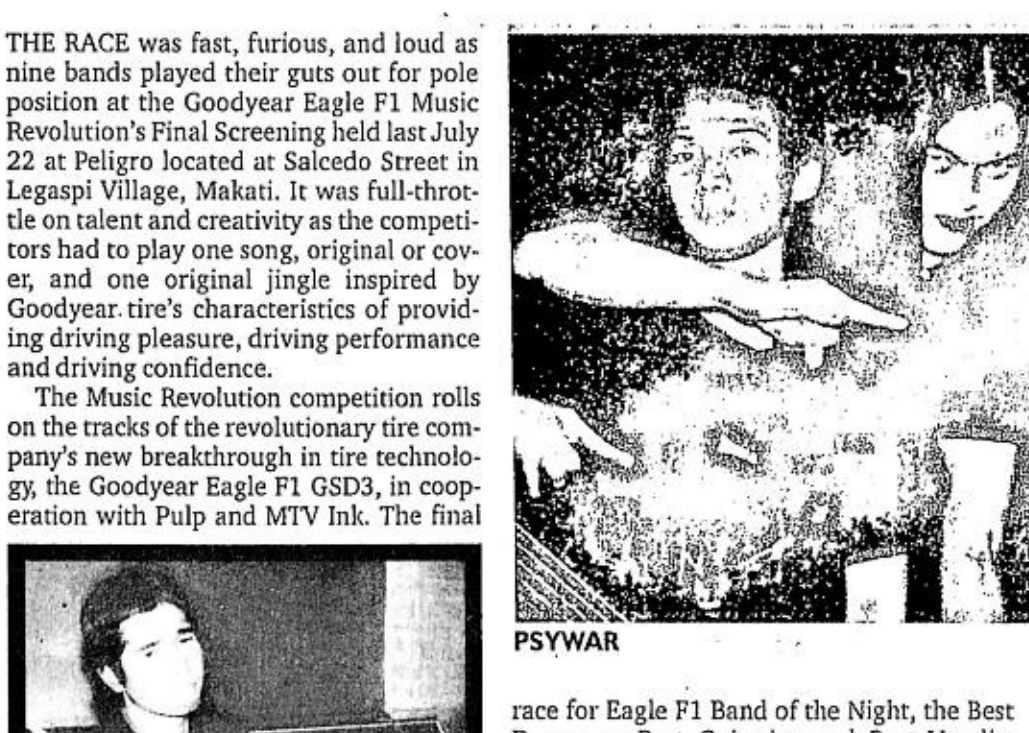
Before the big date however, the real rock stars had to be sifted from the wannabes, and that was precisely what happened on Final Screening night, with judges Vernon Go of Pulp, Kristine Fonacier of MTV Ink, Mica Ruiz of Goodyear Philippines, DJ Max Speed of Magic 89.9, and Richard Francisco of Vicor Records picking out the Final Four: Maryz Ark, Sunflower Day Camp, Psywar, and Maharlika.

As a special treat, bonafide rock stars Bamboo gave their usual no-holds barred performance, bringing the house down with a single set.

Bamboo performs again, along with equally renowned bands Sugarfree, Kjwan and 6 Cycle Mind, headed by MTV's' very own Marc Abaya, on Finals night on August 7. Of course, the four bands who made it through the Screening get to thrash each other again and vie for P50,000 cash, a full-page ad in Pulp Magazine, 3 million pesos worth of airtime, and a possible record deal.

Slap on the Goodyear Eagle F1s and get ready to head down to Le Pavillon on August 7 at 6 p.m. for the final stretch of Goodyear Eagle F1 Music Revolution. It's gonna be fast, loud, and furious, just the way you like it!


BAMBOO in his element


MARYZ ARK

MAHARLIKA

SUNFLOWER DAY CAMP

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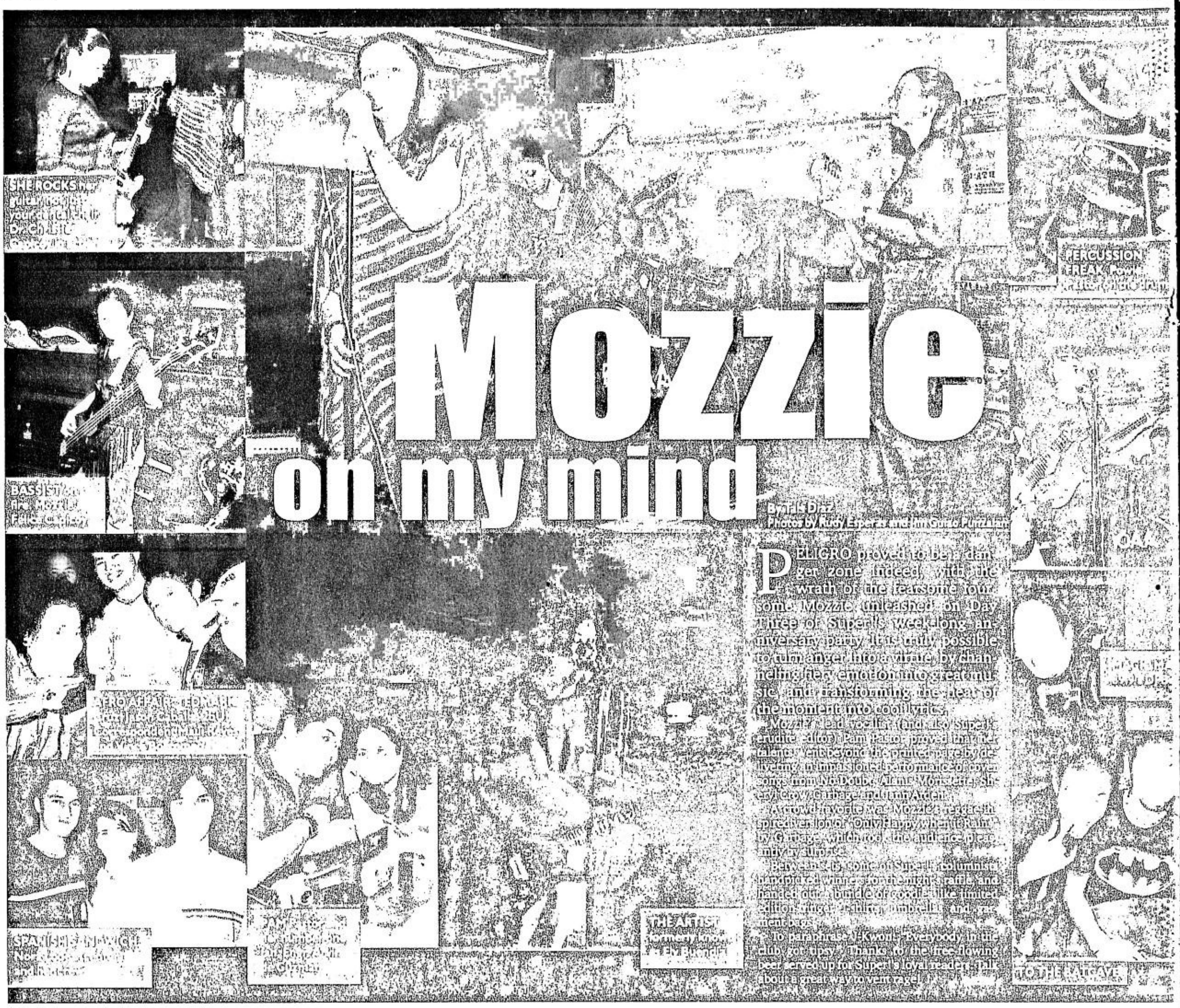

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By T.S. Diaz
Photos by Rudy Espera and Jun Sunga/Mozzie Fans

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Mozzie's lead vocalist (and Super's erudite editor) Pam Pastor proved that her talent went beyond the printed word, delivering an impassioned performance of covers from No Doubt's "Don't Speak" to Gwen Guthrie's "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" by George Michael, the audience pleasantly surprised.

Between sets, Pam and Super's columnists conducted raffle draws for the lunch, raffle, and handed out bundle of goodies like limited edition mugs, t-shirts, umbrellas and more.

To paraphrase Kwoon, "Everybody in the club got tipsy," thanks to the free-flowing beer served up for Super's loyal readers. Talk about a great way to vent rage!

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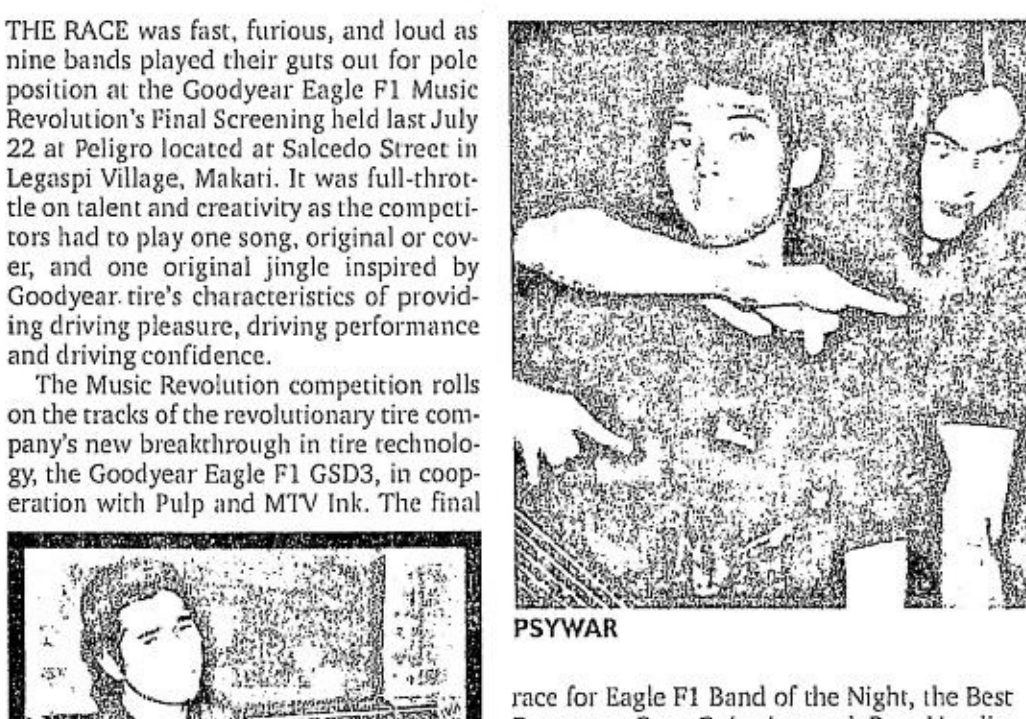
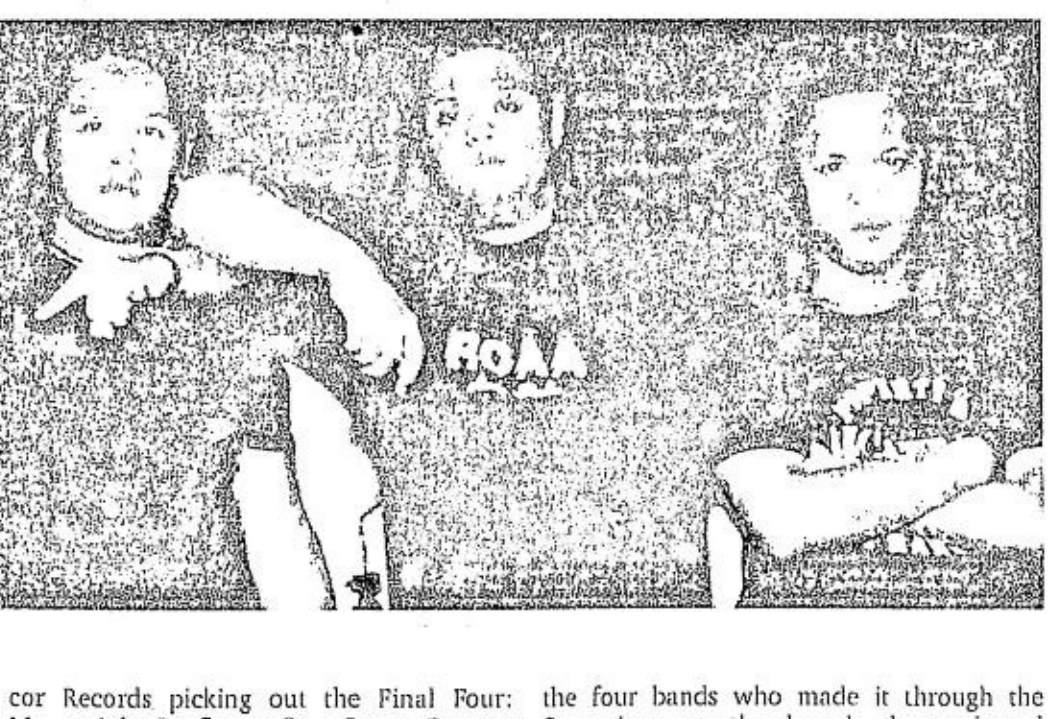

MARYZ ARK


MAHARLIKA

SUNFLOWER DAY CAMP

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DENTAL DUO. Dr. Yoya Tarriela and Dr. Dimps Dalipe

SUPER-MARKET. Chris Vida, Ching dela Cruz, Hazel Soriaga, Zane Ronquillo (far right) and friends.

DELICIOUS DUO

DANGEROUS

HE LOVES SUPER

WE LOVE GATECRASHERS

COOL SHIRT. Annie Arcenas (left) and friend

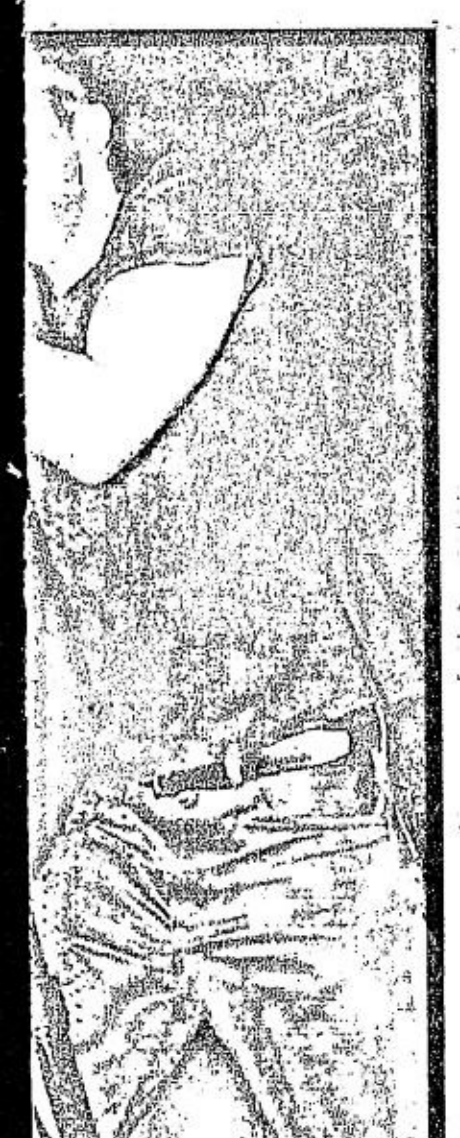
SUPER INTERNS

MARISSE

DON'T FORGET TO FLOSS. Dr.

TURN to the right and smile

YOUR SO FERTILE FRIENDS



Smells like tween spirit

From page I1

In the US, they account for $48 billion in spending per year, using over $15 billion of their own money, and influencing more than $30 billion of their parent's money. Calculated from a 1997 report titled "Capturing the Purchasing Power of Kids," it's clear that tweens are also spending 57.8% more than their predecessors just ten years ago.

By predecessors, they mean us. As the largest—not to mention, wealthiest—group in history, we came of age in an era filled with a blinding onslaught of technical advancements and instant global communications. Alternately called Echo boomers, the baby boomlet, and Generation Y, our generation is roughly defined by research group Schroeder & Tremayne as those born between 1977 and 1994. Since birth, today's teens and twentysomethings have been saturated with media hype and surrounded by material excess that, I guess, made us seasoned, tech-savvy consumers at such an early stage. We may have only recently hit our stride as a demographic, but the world is already bracing itself for the next wave of heavy hitters.

Far from being exploitable suckers, those born after 1994 are like us in most ways. First of all, tweens want and are ready to drop some serious coin, both their own and their parents'. If you don't believe me, check out the crazy cyclotron of magazines aimed at the kiddie pool crew-Teen Vogue, Elle Girl, Teen People, and Cosmo Girl. Next, tweens are similarly into cool, insider recreational finds. Like Gen Y, the 15-and-under set wants to discover something new and word of mouth is the primary source of information among their friends, whether through normal interaction or online communication. On the other hand, tweens are aliens when it comes to other things. Unlike Generation Y's battle plan to remain individualistic at all costs,

KIDDIE POOL COOL. Strike a pose with Teen Vogue

tweens want to belong to a club and don't mind having the same stuff as the next person as long as they belong to the same clique. It's possible that the idea of taking something and customizing it hasn't given them a shout-out just yet. And most strikingly, if most people go all-out when it comes to preserving their youth, tweens aspire to look, act, and be older. I'm sure they'll make a mental U-turn about that someday.

Human chess game

Don't look now, but despite their age, tweens are turning out to be major players in the large-scale human chess game known as pop culture. 13-year-old Los Angeles native Gerren Taylor has been called "the next Naomi" by her modeling agency New York Models. Far from her chubby counterparts in the amateur catalogue-modelling world, Gerren is what I would call a "serious" model, much like new generation gold standards Natalia Vodianova and Jeisa Chiminazzo. In fact, Gerren has appeared in a Marc by Marc Jacobs campaign shot by A-list lensman Juergen Teller. To Gerren, what she does is no different from what young actresses do. The only thing is, starlets play their age or younger, while Gerren, when made up, can easily be mistaken for 21. Red flag!

Another 13-year-old on the verge of mainstream stardom is JoJo. Hailing from Massachusetts, JoJo has become a TRL fixture with her radio smash "Leave (Get Out)". Not camera shy, JoJo has appeared on shows ranging from Bill Cosby's "Kids Say the Darndest Things—On The Road in Boston" to "The Oprah Winfrey Show," where she blew everyone away with her incredible vocal range. After fielding calls from different record labels, she finally signed up with Blackground Records—home to Timbaland & Magoo and the late Aaliyah—to hammer out her self-titled debut. With blues from the likes of Ella

FIRST NAME BASIS. JoJo balances attitude and innocence

Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston and Etta James infused with her own distinct jazzy pop sound, her CD "JoJo" balances attitude and innocence, which is what this non-surnamed prodigy is all about. More power to you, JoJo.

What's my age again?

By the burning light of the computer monitor, it hit me like a big yellow school bus that to my cousin and her playground posse, Kurt Cobain has always been dead. Imagine that! In his place are perky girl power superpowers like Amanda Bynes, Hilary Duff, Lindsay Lohan, Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, and Anne Hathaway. Britney and Christina have moved on to the giant expanse of land known as adulthood and those two can probably only attend a cozy tween mixer when they ditch the singing slut act. Remember that tweens are teens without the sex.

Far from being watered down teens, I nonetheless believe that tweens possess a different ethos altogether. I thought I could read my cousin's head like a crystal ball, but Sam made it clear that despite the sassy uptalk, smart-ditz poise, and adult-like complexity, she was still, in Britney's words, "not a girl, not yet a woman." What was she then? As I hunt for a Blue's Clue to this stumper, chew on this fact: The number of tweens has breached the 23 million mark and that's in the US alone. Throw in the worldwide tween population, multiply that number by a kazillion, and you'll end up with a force to be reckoned with, with a side of onion rings. Is the image of a planet overrun by independent, educated, consumer-oriented postmillennials a sign of the end of civilization? I don't think so. They'll become full-blown teens in a few years, which is presumably when society should start worrying.

PLASTIC FANTASTIC. Welcome to the tweenage jungle

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